

Galahad

by

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"With this sword, I have given you the highest order which God has made and commanded: It is the Order of Chivalry, which shall be without wickedness."

-The Knighting of Perceval,
Chrétien de Troyes

FADE IN:

EXT. ALBION COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The midday sun lances through a veil of storm clouds, bathing this lush, rolling Albion countryside in light and warmth.

Hooves THUNDER the earth where a cloud of dust rises like vapor around an approaching brigade of RIDERS ON HORSEBACK.

A SPRAWLING MEDIEVAL ESTATE sits in the valley below.

THE APPROACHING RIDERS crest a hill woven in high grass.

SIR GALAHAD OF AVALON (30s) wears a silver-black beard over his weather-worn face. Wavy black hair hangs over his broad shoulders. His gray eyes survey the tremendous estate.

With him is a small MILITIA DETACHMENT, all wearing identical heraldry: a dragon's head roaring in a circle of flame.

LYNETTE (26), Galahad's wife, rides up beside him. She is a comely woman with full features and flowing brown hair.

GALAHAD

Does this please my Lady?

Lynette studies her new lands. Without a word, she leaves Galahad to begin the descent down the hill toward the estate.

LUCAN (O.S.)

All of this is ours, father?

LUCAN (7) pulls his mount up beside Galahad. There is an intelligence set in the boy's young features.

GALAHAD

When a Knight pledges himself to the Round Table, he surrenders everything in service of the King. In exchange, he receives lands and an estate that will be held for him until his service is complete.

LUCAN

How long will that be?

GALAHAD

After tomorrow, the next time I lay my eyes upon my son, he will be a grown man, likely with a wife and children of his own.

This is a sobering reality for Lucan.

INT. STABLES - DAY

Ruddy and perspiring from a day's ride, Galahad and Lucan remove the saddles from their horses.

LUCAN

I am proud of you, father.

GALAHAD

(laughing)

Oh? And what has your father done to deserve such acclaim?

LUCAN

You are to join the Round Table.
The King's personal bodyguard, the six greatest warriors in the realm.

Galahad sets his saddle on a high peg inside the stall.

GALAHAD

Not the greatest warriors, Lucan.
The finest knights. Do you know what it is that separates the warrior from the knight?

LUCAN

Only the King or a high lord can make a knight.

GALAHAD

(shakes his head)

Honor. A warrior is just a weapon on the battlefield. A knight must possess conscience.

Galahad's eyes narrow. He places a hand on Lucan's shoulder.

GALAHAD

Honor is the greatest virtue a man can possess. It is above valor, above glory. Above even compassion. Any fool can wield a sword. The man who does so with conscience, with honor, is the true knight.

Galahad musses Lucan's hair before putting an arm around him and escorting him from the stables.

INT. GALAHAD'S ESTATE - MASTER BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Galahad wakes in the darkness of an expansive master bedchamber to find that his wife has left their bed.

He slides from the down coverings and passes through the gossamer canopy that tents the bed.

Pulling on a pair of trousers, Galahad joins Lynette at the arched bedchamber window.

LYNETTE
All that I look upon is ours.

The drapery over the window flaps in the outside breeze.

GALAHAD
And more, my love.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW lies the moonlit landscape of their new estate. Treetops are like dark heads looking out from the pale blue of the night sky.

LYNETTE
I look upon now all I wish to have.

She's looking at Galahad. His bare torso is chiseled from stone, his skin a living history of battles lost and won. Galahad takes his wife's face into his hands:

GALAHAD
I do this for us, Lynette. For our son. My father had nothing. But my son will want for nothing.
(this does not sway her)
It is the King's own command that I join The Six. I would dishonor him to refuse. And dishonor my family.

LYNETTE
Honor cannot warm my bed at night.
I want my husband, Galahad.

GALAHAD
You know I will return to you.

LYNETTE
When I am a withered old crone?

GALAHAD
I will be the oldest knight ever to take a seat at The Round Table. I shall perform my duty to my King. And when it is done, we shall live out our long lives. Here, together, and with need for naught. That, I promise you.

She wants to believe him, but she doesn't. Lynette sinks into Galahad's open arms, grasping at what will soon be gone.

EXT. GALAHAD'S ESTATE - COURTYARD - THE NEXT MORNING

A THUNDERING THRONG OF HORSES gallops through the clearing on their way toward Galahad's estate.

Galahad, now dressed in the red and gray heraldry of the Great House Pendragon, awaits their coming with Lynette and Lucan at his side.

LUCAN

Do you think Sir Lancelot is among them, father?

Galahad gazes down at Lucan, who nearly bounces with excitement. Without irony, Lucan looks up and says:

LUCAN

They say he's the finest swordsman to have ever lived.

The riders approach -- In moments --

SIR LANCELOT, SIR GAWAIN and a small detachment of the KING'S MILITIA trot up on horseback. Galahad bows his head.

GALAHAD

My Lords Lancelot and Gawain.

SIR LANCELOT (22) is striking to behold. He has flawless skin and perfect bone structure. His piercing blue eyes look out between golden locks of hair. Young Lancelot is beautiful, he is arrogant, and he is deadly. He smiles down at Lynette:

LANCELOT

I hope you will excuse me if I don't look my best, my Lady Lynette. I fear the hard ride South into the White Valley has put a scowl on my face angrier than the blisters it put on my arse.

Lynette looks at Galahad, despairing. *Don't leave us.* Galahad embraces her, whispering gently into her ear:

GALAHAD

When has your husband not honored his word?

Galahad pulls back to see Lynette force a smile.

A STABLE HAND leads an impressive black charger to Galahad. Galahad swings his leg over top, settling into the saddle.

LANCELOT

Do not fret, my Lady. One day, His Grace the King will surely return both father and husband, handsome and unspoiled. Shall he not, Lord Gawain?

SIR GAWAIN (35) HUFFS a laugh. For every quality Lancelot has in aesthetic beauty, Gawain counters with grim forboding.

Gawain's skin is like white leather stretched over bone. Pin-straight, jet black hair stands out against the paleness of his skin. Arching eyebrows meet on the center of a high forehead that is halved by a pronounced widow's peak.

Lancelot grins. *You have no idea what is in store.*

EXT. THE OPEN PLAINS OF ALBION - NIGHT

Lancelot's party reigns to a halt on a high ridge. The horsed riders look out over an expanse of land whose borders vanish against the swallowing darkness of the night.

THE CITY OF CAMELOT is a beacon in the dark. The city's torches blaze like wildfire against the surrounding darkness.

Camelot is not some city of fairy-tales. The spires of the city are sharp and severe. Its unscalable walls are monstrously tall. The structure is at once a marvel of design and a warning to its enemies: challenge us at your own peril.

LANCELOT

The sight of home is always sweet,
is it not, Galahad?

GALAHAD

I could behold it a thousand times
and never tire of its beauty.

LANCELOT

Aye, but the next time you will do
so not as some common thug of the
city guard, but as one of the most
feared swords in the realm.

Lancelot urges his charger forward. The horses and riders soon vanish into the inky darkness -- DARKNESS -- THEN --

TIME SLOWS -- A voice speaks calmly from the ether as IMAGES burn in, then out just as quickly --

GALAHAD (V.O.)

I am one of six.
I am a degree of the circle.
I have completed the six trials.

...Galahad bows to five BROAD-SHOULDERED SILHOUETTES --

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the blade.

...Blindfolded, Galahad raises a sword in torchlight --

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the fist.

...Galahad grapples with a man twice his size --

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the pain.

...His arms and legs tethered, five men beat Galahad bloody --

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the will.

...Galahad is teased by a swarm of NAKED WOMEN --

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the blood.

...Galahad drapes a cloak over the shoulders of a FAT MAN --

GALAHAD (V.O.)
And that of the oath itself.

...HORSES TRAMPLE high grass -- The blazing sun becomes --

INT. CHAMBER OF THE ROUND TABLE - NIGHT

-- The torchlit Chamber of the Round Table. It is a room suited for the knights of legend. The walls are decorated in tapestries that tell the tales of King Arthur's knights.

A ROUND TABLE SEAL, alive in scrollwork and gold inlay, is embossed in the stone at the center of this chamber's floor.

GALAHAD (V.O.)
I take this oath to forego all else
in protection of the royal blood of
King Arthur Pendragon.

KING ARTHUR PENDRAGON (60s) steps into the torchlight. The man is corpulent; soft and round. Exhausted eyes are sunken deep into his jowly face. This cow of a man couldn't lift a sword to save his own life. This King, like the city of Camelot and the knights that defend it, is no idealized portrait of legend.

Galahad, shirtless, is knelt before both FIVE OTHER KNIGHTS and King Arthur himself. Galahad completes the oath:

GALAHAD

I am my king's sword and I am his
shield. I have given all in service
of him. My possessions are forfeit.
My family are strangers to my eyes.
I shall know not love, or desire,
or envy, or want.

King Arthur grasps the end of an IRON BRAND, its end cooking
red hot in a bed of straw and coals --

GALAHAD

I shall know only this oath.
Loyalty above all else.
For I am one of The Six.
I am a degree of the circle.

The King removes the smoking brand from the coals. The end, a
CIRCLE, glows a molten orange.

GALAHAD

My life, my last drop of blood, in
service to the Crown of Albion.

HISSSSSS! The circle brand SCORCHES Galahad's chest. At once,
steam rises from the cauterized wound as a stream of blood
runs out onto the ROUND TABLE SEAL at Galahad's knees.

Galahad CRIES OUT -- Falls -- Then, slowly, he rises,
revealing a RED CIRCLE seared into his chest.

KING ARTHUR

Rise now, Sir Galahad of Avalon,
loyal Knight of The Round Table.

Galahad climbs to his feet. Steadies.

THE LADY GUINEVERE (26) steps forward. The finest dress from
the kingdom's finest seamstress hugs her perfect body. Her
skin is a flawless olive, her lips full and pink. Inside the
lady's almond-shaped eyes swim pools of the deepest blue.

The Lady Guinevere is the most beautiful woman alive. She
leans in and kisses both of Galahad's cheeks. On the second
cheek, she lingers just a bit longer than custom...

LADY GUINEVERE

I shall sleep soundly knowing you
are in our service, Sir Galahad.

GALAHAD

I am honored beyond words, Lady
Guinevere.

Lady Guinevere smiles a disarming smile. BOOM! -- SMASH TO --

EXT. THE KING'S WOODLANDS - DAY

-- HORSE HOOVES -- Something THRASHES THROUGH THE WOODS as HOUNDS BRAY nearby -- The horses follow -- Above them --

A canopy of perfect green shades the lush foliage at the foot of the woods from the strong summer sun blazing above.

The WHOOPING HOUNDS race through the foliage ahead of them --

INSERT TITLE: 5 Years Later

Galahad races on horseback at the head of the party.

King Arthur, a whale on horseback, rides behind this phalanx of Round Table knights, his eyes are wide with excitement:

KING ARTHUR
They have a scent!

GALAHAD
Hold!

The other FIVE ROUND TABLE KNIGHTS rear up behind Galahad. In addition to SIR LANCELOT and SIR GAWAIN, they are:

PERCIVAL (18) is a baby-faced knight in search of glory.

CARADOC (27), known as "THE GREEN KNIGHT," is a fair-skinned Hybernian who would have a mane of red hair were his head not shaved bald. He wears a fiery goatee on his stoic face.

Finally, MLAGANT THE MAD (30). Malagant is a head taller than his brethren. His huge frame must weigh 15 stone. As if this 7-foot beast weren't imposing enough, he is TATTOOED from head to toe in black ink. The tattoos outline Malagant's skeleton. His fingers, his arms, his skull, HIS FACE -- every last bone is outlined in black on his flesh.

There, the knights wait in silence -- Chests heaving --

SUDDENLY - the racing hounds flush a magnificent STAG from the trees --

MORDRED
Father!

Riding with the knights is a group of YOUNG SQUIRES. One, MORDRED PENDRAGON II (14), is King Arthur's son. Though slender, he looks to be of heartier stuff than his father.

The huge, horned stag crosses in front of the riders --

Lancelot KNOCKS HIS BOW to fire --

KING ARTHUR (O.S.)

No!

King Arthur's pudgy fingers fumble with an arrow --

KING ARTHUR

He is mine!

With child-like excitement, The King tries to draw the bow, but does not have the strength. The arrow slips, firing harmlessly into the woods --

Lancelot's lip curls smugly at the sad spectacle.

DEEPER IN THE WOODLANDS

Horse-hooves POUND the ground as the riding party navigates through the dense trees --

The riders rear up their horses. Lancelot climbs off his saddle. HOUNDS YAP from the woods, their calls fading --

PERCIVAL

They may have lost the scent...

Galahad hops off his mount, his eyes fixed on something --

A PILE OF SHIT. Galahad walks over, kicks it with his boot.

GALAHAD

The spoor is fresh.

SUDDENLY - A WOMAN SHRIEKS. Very scared. Very near. Hands go to swords as footfalls CRUNCH on dead leaves, coming CLOSER and CLOSER toward the King's hunting party --

A LONE PEASANT WOMAN races into their midst. Her eyes are wild. She's filthy, dressed in rags. The woman runs to Malagant, groping at his saddle, SOBBING and HYSTERICALLY --

MALAGANT

Stop your braying, woman.

Malagant, voice deep and BOOMING, kicks her away from him --

LANCELOT

It seems the mighty stag has skin-changed into a filthy peasant woman to escape your arrows, your Grace.

MORDRED

Where did she come from?

GALAHAD

There is a farming village nearby.

Percival leaps off his horse. Goes to the woman --

CARADOC
(thick brogue)
Aye. The Village Glatisant.

PERCIVAL
Who are you? What happened?

The woman looks up at Percival, tears smearing the caked dirt on her face. She points back where she came from and SHRIEKS:

PEASANT WOMAN
SARACENS!

And suddenly, the party is hyper-vigilant. *Danger.*

GALAHAD
Swords!

Steel is RIPPED from leather scabbards. Galahad remounts his horse. The Knights of the Round Table encircle King Arthur --

AT THE EDGE OF THE WOODLANDS

THE VILLAGE is sacked by a swarm of dark-skinned Saracens. They wear blue cotton, sashed at the waist in gold. They wield saber-like swords called *scimitars* --

This is a party of THIRTY SARACEN RAIDERS. They burn, rape, pillage, murder. One beheads a male villager on his knees.

ANGLE ON - Percival spurs his mount forward, set to charge --

PERCIVAL
Your orders, Sir Galahad?

King Arthur shifts nervously in his saddle. He's petrified.

KING ARTHUR
(barely a whisper)
We must flee.

The decision pains Galahad. He hesitates. Then:

GALAHAD
Lancelot, scout the retreat.

PERCIVAL
My lord?

GALAHAD
We must escort the King to safety.

MORDRED
Galahad, they are killing them!

GALAHAD

The Round Table's duty is to King,
not kingdom. Come.

Galahad wheels his horse around, prepared to go when --

CRASH! Bodies tumble through a broken wall of the nearest village hut. A Saracen Raider CURSES at a YOUNG GIRL who struggles in futility. The Saracen tears off her skirt --

LANCELOT

Bugger this.

Lancelot knocks an arrow -- TWANG! -- He looses it --

THE ARROW spears clean through the Saracen Raider's head, spattering the young girl in his gore.

ANOTHER SARACEN eyes track... he spots King Arthur's party -- He shouts an ALARM to his comrades in a GUTTURAL TONGUE --

At once, all Saracen eyes are on King Arthur's hunting party.

GALAHAD

The Shadows take you, Lancelot.

The SARACEN LEADER of the raid points at King Arthur with his scimitar and ORDERS THE ATTACK --

LANCELOT

(grinning at Galahad)

The day is about to get wet, boys!

Galahad points with his sword, firing off battle commands --

GALAHAD

Lancelot, Malagant, Gawain, ride out to meet them. Squires, follow on their charge. Percival, Caradoc, you are here with me and His Grace.

The SARACEN CHARGE begins -- They charge toward the King --

LANCELOT, MALAGANT and GAWAIN lead the squires to meet them --

The mounted charge SAWs THROUGH the first wave of Saracens, who come at them on foot --

Gawain and the squires ride into the village after them --

Malagant and Lancelot dismount to face their enemies on foot.

Even ground. Man to man.

And the Saracen that Malagant faces does not stand a chance. He is a full foot shorter than the huge, tattooed madman.

Malagant sidesteps the raider's pathetic slash -- He raises his two-handed sword -- And SPLITS the Saracen's torso from shoulder to waist.

Lancelot, a living legend with his sword, is far more graceful. He faces three Saracens, who try to encircle him.

LANCELOT

Try to lay a blade to my flesh, sun worshippers. No man ever has. You could become a thing of legend.

The first Saracen attacks -- Moving like liquid, he twirls, coming about behind the raider and runs him through --

One down. Two left. They come at Lancelot from his flanks -- The Saracen behind him raises his sword -- But Lancelot whirls and SEVERS the Saracen's sword hand at the wrist --

Lancelot catches the scimitar as it falls, the CLEAVED SARACEN HAND still holding onto the scimitar's hilt --

He spins to face the final raider, now wielding a sword in each hand and SCISSOR-CUTS the Saracen's head clean off --

-- The cut SPRAYS LANCELOT IN BLOOD. He is disgusted. Repulsed. Lancelot searches the ground for a clean cloak to wipe himself off, which he cannot do fast enough.

ANGLE ON - Galahad watches the rout of the village's raiding party when, from behind:

PERCIVAL (O.S.)
Sir Galahad!

Galahad turns around. FIVE SARACENS have circled around behind them -- Galahad goes to dismount his horse, but KING ARTHUR paws at his shoulder with a fat, shaking hand --

KING ARTHUR
Do not leave me, Galahad! Please!

The King's eyes are wide and wet. His voice quavers in the plea. King Arthur is terrified. Galahad nods at the raiders:

GALAHAD
Percival, Caradoc.

Percival and Caradoc ride out, swords drawn -- They cut down two of the Saracens quickly, then give chase to another --

This leaves one last Saracen. A brutish, burly raider. He grins a smile of broken and rotting teeth, CACKLING --

Galahad hops down off his horse, bringing his sword to bear. The Saracen lunges forward with a slash --

CLANG! Galahad deflects it, knocking the sword aside and thrusting his broadsword into the Saracen's throat -- Galahad TWISTS the blade to open the wound and yanks it free --

Violent. Skilled. But economical and without arrogance. Galahad wipes the blood off his sword and remounts his horse.

ANGLE ON - Gawain chases down a YOUNG SARACEN. Just a boy, he is terrified. He throws away his sword. But Gawain advances --

The boy falls to his knees, BABBLING FOR MERCY --

But Gawain runs him through. He thrusts the boy's corpse off his sword with a boot. Hard. Brutal. Merciless.

IN A VILLAGE LEAN-TO

Malagant walks in on a rape -- The thrashing WOMAN looks over her attacker's shoulder and SCREAMS at the sight of Malagant.

Malagant DRAGS the SARACEN off his victim and twists the man's head completely around -- SNAP --

The woman goes to flee the lean-to --

But Malagant pushes her back down onto the bed of hay. She looks up as he reaches into his trousers --

MALAGANT

Shame to waste what's already been spoiled.

LATER, IN THE VILLAGE

The surviving villagers pick up what is left of their lives.

The Round Table Knights survey the corpses of their fallen enemies. Malagant rolls one of the bodies over with a boot.

KING ARTHUR

No Saracen raid has struck this far North before. What should we make of this, Galahad?

CARADOC

Might be outriders, your Grace.

LANCELOT

Could be these sand-eating bastards have finally set eyes upon Camelot.

Crouched over a Saracen corpse, Galahad handles one of the raider's SCIMITARS. A RISING SUN is etched into the steel.

GALAHAD

Palamedes.

Galahad throws down the scimitar and rises to his feet.

PERCIVAL
The Grand Vizier's scouts? Here?

MALAGANT
We should sword-fuck every last one
of 'em from asshole to eyes.

GALAHAD
Mount up. I want us inside the city
walls before dark.

Galahad slings a leg over his horse, climbs into the saddle.

EXT. ALBION COUNTRYSIDE - THE MOTHER'S ROAD - DAY

King Arthur's hunting party makes the long ride for home.
Caradoc rides beside Galahad --

CARADOC
Sir Galahad, your estate is not far
from here is it?

GALAHAD
Two or three hours' ride Southeast.

CARADOC
(grinning)
And how often has my Lord slipped
away from the cold stone of Camelot
into the warm bed of his woman?

GALAHAD
Never.

CARADOC
Never, my Lord?

GALAHAD
You and I have taken the same oath,
Sir Caradoc.

CARADOC
I do not think the King's life
would be endangered by his First
Knight going to see his woman.

GALAHAD
It is not our place to decide which
parts of our oaths to uphold. Our
loved ones will await us on the
other side of our duty to the King.

Galahad rides ahead of Caradoc.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GATES OF CAMELOT - DUSK

KING ARTHUR'S HUNTING PARTY rides for Camelot's front gate.

The wall before them is a hundred feet tall. Recessed within the thick wall is a black iron portcullis. The gate's feet are suspended above them like a row of monstrous teeth.

As the King's party passes underneath, the gate descends -- And then LOCKS DOWN, sealing inside all that is within.

EXT. THE CITY OF CAMELOT - CONTINUOUS

Inside the towering walls lies a buzzing medieval city.

Laborers and craftsmen -- butchers, tailors, smiths -- have begun closing down their shop fronts for the coming of night. Men light TORCHES to keep the city alight until daybreak.

Thriving though Camelot is, this is a true medieval city. It is dirty. Mangy, starved dogs run loose. Many people are ill or crippled, walking with limps or not walking at all.

And at the heart of the walled city lies THE CASTLE CAMELOT.

The King's party traverses the city's main road. Common folk stop to marvel at the celebrity of the King and his knights.

The air is filled with FAINT SONG as a haunting woman's voice sings in an ancient tongue.

When a cluster of HOODED DRUIDS approaches the King's party, they stop and bow their heads in reverence to the holy men.

Percival helps one of the squires pull a MORTALLY WOUNDED SQUIRE (14) off the back of his horse. They pass him down to the druids, who await him with a SMALL CART for transport.

Mordred watches this, still ghost white from battle shock. With tears in his eyes, he speaks to the druids:

MORDRED

Please help him. T-T-Tristan is --
(trying to hold the sobs)
-- a good f-friend.

Caradoc places a gentle hand on Mordred's shoulder.

CARADOC

The Wise Ones of the Oak bear the secrets of the Green Mother herself, my Prince. If a remedy exists, Tristan shall have it.

The druids, who have taken oaths of silence, say nothing.
They wheel the wounded Tristan away toward --

A DRUIDIC MONASTERY, a circular stone construct set apart
from the Castle Camelot, but inside the high city walls.

CARADOC
(listening to the song)
Morgan la Fey mourns our fallen.

GALAHAD
She could not know. We just
returned.

CARADOC
The "Mother's Daughter" is a gifted
seer.

Galahad does not believe a word of this.

LANCELOT
(re: Caradoc)
Our "Green Knight" is a man of
zealous faith, is he not?

Lancelot grins. He doesn't believe a word of it, either.

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - KING'S SOLAR - NIGHT

Galahad escorts King Arthur into his solar, a private living
area abound in exquisite furnishings. King Arthur shuffles
when he walks, like he it pains him to move his big body.

KING ARTHUR
Help me change, Galahad?

Confused at the strange request, Galahad nonetheless obeys.
King Arthur sheds his robe and turns around, revealing that --

He's pissed himself. And he does not seem to be ashamed.

KING ARTHUR
My loving father used to say that I
did not have the stomach for war.
(re: his bulging gut)
But it does seem that I have it for
nearly everything else, hmm?

The huge man leans on Galahad as he struggles into a clean
set of trousers. When it is done:

KING ARTHUR
Why do you want this life, Galahad?

GALAHAD
Your Grace?

KING ARTHUR
War, combat, they are awful things.
We glorify them as boys, but then
we become men, don't we? And we see
them as they are, the most vile
part of us. So I ask -- why? Is it
for glory? For valor?

GALAHAD
There is no greater honor to a man
of Albion, Your Grace, than living
and dying as a knight of the King's
Round Table.

KING ARTHUR
Honor is worth little to a dead
man, Galahad. Help me sit.

Galahad helps his King up into a high sitting chair. He rubs his hanging jowls before looking up.

KING ARTHUR
When I was a boy of fourteen, my
father dragged me into battle
against the coup at Wandesboro.
(squeezing his eyes shut)
I watched Uther Pendragon's army
slice through his own people... I
can still see the horrors, vivid as
day, whenever I close my eyes.
(opening his eyes)
A great King, not a good King, but
a great one -- would never visit
such brutality on his people.

SLAM! Suddenly, the entrance door to the solar BOOMS open -- LADY GUINEVERE storms inside. She is stunning, even in rage.

LADY GUINEVERE
Saracens? Here? In Britony? This is
an act of war, Arthur.

Galahad steps aside as Guinevere stomps toward them.

KING ARTHUR
I believe the Lady Guinevere wishes
my private counsel, Sir Galahad.
Who is my posted guard this eve?

GALAHAD
Sir Percival, your Grace.

King Arthur nods. *Go then.* Galahad bows to Lady Guinevere --

GALAHAD

My Lady.

Galahad takes the long walk from the solar. When he is gone:

KING ARTHUR

I do not stand on ceremony,
Guinevere, but do not forget
yourself in my court.

Guinevere is enraged. She SLAPS the King --

LADY GUINEVERE

I think you forget that you are the
king of a land under siege!

The King rubs his rose-red cheek, stunned at her defiance.

KING ARTHUR

My father would have beaten a woman
for such insolence.

LADY GUINEVERE

Perhaps, but you are not Uther
Pendragon, are you, my King?

KING ARTHUR

Mother be blessed. My father was a
tyrant.

LADY GUINEVERE

"The King hunts while his Kingdom
falls prey." Poetic, no? It is the
whispered mantra of your own
people. King Uther traveled this
castle like a ghost. None dared
defy him.

KING ARTHUR

The halls of my Camelot exist
outside the walls. I will not skulk
about in hidden passages so that I
may rule through fear.

LADY GUINEVERE

Your father would already have ten
thousand foot marching on the
Qu'Rad Empire. And he would leave a
wake of skewered Saracen heads in
his return to Camelot.

KING ARTHUR

Those raiders paid the dearest
price for their crimes, Guinevere

Tears have welled in Lady Guinevere's eyes. She is shaking.

LADY GUINEVERE

"Raiders?" Every year, hundreds of my people are raped and murdered by these "raiders." Lyonesse has held the Saracens at bay for a century. And now their threat creeps North, but still you do nothing!

KING ARTHUR

I shall send three garrisons South to fortify the borderlands.

LADY GUINEVERE

The Grand Vizier Palamedes defies you, Arthur. Challenges you to act.

King Arthur struggles to stand up. Already out of breath:

KING ARTHUR

Then he will meet my three garrisons and know my response. I am retiring to my chambers.

(moving to leave)
Good night, Guinevere.

More wroth than when she arrived, Guinevere watches him go.

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - GALAHAD'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Inside Galahad's modest quarters, Galahad writes with a quill by candlelight. He finishes the letter, goes to the chest at the foot of his bed.

INSIDE: Wrapped in cloth is a latched wooden box. Galahad opens it. Inside are dozens of PARCHMENT LETTERS.

Galahad places the freshly written one on top. The heading of the letter reads "MY DEAREST LYNETTE," -- He CLOSES the box.

GALAHAD GRABS HIS SHEATHED SWORD --

LATER - Sharp steel glints in the firelight as Galahad works on his sword blade with a wetstone, honing the edge --

The heavy iron KNOCKER on Galahad's chamber door THUDS.

Shirtless and sweating from his work, Galahad looks up:

GALAHAD

Come.

The door CREAKS open and a small figure steps inside. When she steps into the light, LADY GUINEVERE drops her hood --

Galahad stands so quickly that his sword falls off his lap onto the floor. He lowers his eyes, reaching for his shirt --

GALAHAD

My Lady, I -- I did not expect --

With the confidence of a Queen, Lady Guinevere takes a seat at the edge of the bed. She stares lustily at his muscled torso, which bears the CIRCULAR BRAND of the Round Table.

LADY GUINEVERE

Nor should you have. I did not announce my coming.

(as he pulls on his shirt)
Please, do not dress on my account.

Galahad adjusts his shirt. Guinevere smiles a sultry grin.

GALAHAD

What might I do for you, my Lady?

LADY GUINEVERE

I ask that you speak reason with your King. The Saracen threat waits on our borders. Palamedes senses Arthur's weakness. He will strike. It is only a matter of time.

GALAHAD

It is not my place, my Lady.

Retrieving his sword, he slides it back into its scabbard.

LADY GUINEVERE

Any fool can kill for his King. His First Knight is meant to be his most trusted man; a counsellor as well as a soldier.

GALAHAD

His Grace is better served trusting me with his life than with his politics, my Lady.

She studies him like a viper deciding where best to strike.

LADY GUINEVERE

When I was a girl, my mother would visit the poor villages in Lyonesse, providing alms and food. There was a terrible drought when I was eight. I spent the summer with my mother, going from village to village, providing what help we could.

As the memory comes back to her, Guinevere suddenly becomes vulnerable. She is sharing the deepest part of herself.

LADY GUINEVERE

We did not see them until they were already upon us. Six of my father's men were killed instantly. The rest scattered the Saracen raid, but it was too much...

Tears well in Guinevere's eyes, but her voice does not break.

LADY GUINEVERE

I watched those savages tear my mother apart like a pack of wolves. She begged for mercy, but they offered none. It is only by the Green Mother's will that I stand here before you...

Guinevere pulls aside her dress, showing Galahad HER BREAST, which is marred by a thick scar.

LADY GUINEVERE

Camelot has not seen the horrors that Lyonesse has endured. But that day will come. Please, Galahad.

GALAHAD

My Lady --

Galahad stands -- Guinevere steps in close and kisses him. At first too shocked to react, Galahad does nothing. But when his wits come around he gently pushes her away --

LADY GUINEVERE

I will do anything you ask.

GALAHAD

Then leave here and never speak of this!

She advances on him -- Tucks her hands into his trousers --

LADY GUINEVERE

I was married off to a corpse when I was no more than a child. My husband took his heir from my womb fourteen years ago and has not ventured there since...

(whispering)

I can give you what every man in this realm desires...

Her hands wander -- Galahad can barely resist her -- But he backs away. Quickly, he snatches his sword and walks out.

EXT. THE CITY OF CAMELOT - LATER THAT NIGHT

The sleeping city is awash in the pale light of a half moon. Galahad walks on a path, guided by the moonlight from a clear night sky above. He approaches a circular stone structure --

THE STONEHENGE is a circle of titanic stones in an otherwise empty grass field. This is a holy place of worship. Galahad sticks his sword in the earth outside the circle.

INSIDE THE STONEHENGE

Galahad kneels. He prays silently for forgiveness.

MORDRED (O.S.)
Tristan is dead.

Thinking he was alone, Galahad is surprised to see Mordred.

MORDRED
The Druids could not help him. Not even their Saracen, who is said to possess some dark magic.

GALAHAD
Tristan died in his King's service.
There is no death more honorable.

Mordred stands, walks over to Galahad.

MORDRED
I killed a man today. I did not tell my father, but I wretched on that Saracen after I cut him down.

GALAHAD
Bors, my old Captain, said that a new warrior will wrench the cowardice from himself on the battlefield. This is a good thing, Mordred. No man should be able to kill without conscience.

MORDRED
Do you think my father is a coward?

GALAHAD
Why would you ask such a thing?

MORDRED
My mother begs me to find the courage that my father lacks. She believes we should go to war with the Qu'Rad Empire.

GALAHAD

Your mother is a woman of strong conviction. A virtuous trait.

MORDRED

The histories say we were once at peace with the Saracens. Long ago.

GALAHAD

(chuckles)

Aye. Even before Galahad the Gray.

MORDRED

Their Grand Vizier sent his most skilled engineers to help Uther, my grandfather's grandfather, build Camelot. But when they finished, the King had the Saracens slain to protect the castle's secrets.

GALAHAD

I have heard the same tale.

MORDRED

Camelot has a maze of secret passages, rooms, doors. I have found a dozen of them.

GALAHAD

And there are a hundred more. I tried to map them myself when I was Captain of the city guard. The Castle Camelot is a marvel of engineering, that much is true.

Mordred pauses a moment. Then:

MORDRED

Is my father a coward for refusing to go to war, Galahad?

GALAHAD

To declare war is to sign the death warrant of thousands of your own people. Many men judge their King, but few will ever know his burden.

MORDRED

I will. That is why I come here to pray each night and ask the Green Mother to guide me.

GALAHAD

Until that day comes, you must learn from your father.

GALAHAD (CONT'D)

Arthur Pendragon is a man of wisdom
and compassion. I would give my
life in his service.

Mordred weighs Galahad's advice.

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - OUTSIDE ROYAL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Percival dozes on his feet deep into his watch outside the King's chambers. Soft FOOTFALLS climb stone stairs. Percival shudders awake, suddenly on alert --

When LANCELOT emerges from the spiral stairwell.

PERCIVAL

Lancelot?

LANCELOT

It is your lucky night, Percival. I
am relieving your watch.

PERCIVAL

You are not on watch tonight.

LANCELOT

I believe that is what makes this
"your lucky night." The King sent
for me. The Saracen raid has His
Grace terrified of some assassin
coming for him in the night.

PERCIVAL

I was not notified.

LANCELOT

I am notifying you. Go back to
sleep. This time in your quarters.

Embarrassed at having been caught asleep, Percival withdraws.

PERCIVAL

Good night, my Lord.

Lancelot smirks and takes his post at the King's door.

INT. THE KING'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - NIGHT

With the blazing fireplace flickering behind him, King Arthur writes with quill and ink on a piece of curling parchment. The door to the chamber CREAKS open.

King Arthur looks up to see the LADY GUINEVERE enter.

KING ARTHUR

My Lady?

Guinevere steps deeper inside, saying nothing. King Arthur goes back to his parchment, dipping the quill in an inkwell --

KING ARTHUR
I will not speak of war again,
Guinevere. Not at this late hour.

Still she says nothing. Arthur, finally looks up. There are tears in Guinevere's eyes. She offers out her hand:

LADY GUINEVERE
Arthur...

King Arthur takes her hand as a tear rolls down her cheek.

KING ARTHUR
What is it, my Lady?

Lady Guinevere leans in, squeezing his face and kissing him on the mouth. Then --

LADY GUINEVERE
I came to Camelot to marry the
strong son of Uther Pendragon --

Arthur smiles at her. But his smile turns to stone when:

LADY GUINEVERE
-- But you are a coward, Arthur.
You have failed your people.

Lady Guinevere squeezes his cheeks, forcing his lips open --
With her other hand, Guinevere raises a small GLASS PHIAL --

She pops out the cork with her thumb -- Inside the phial is a brown liquid -- Guinevere forces the poison between King Arthur's pursed lips, speaking through GRIT TEETH:

LADY GUINEVERE
I will not sit idle as our
sovereignty slips away. I will not
watch as Camelot's walls break and
the Saracen nations pour inside.

King Arthur COLLAPSES -- He GASPS harder for air, GURGLING and GAGGING as he turns a deep purple --

LADY GUINEVERE
And I will not have my son inherit
a conquered kingdom.

Guinevere releases him and backs away.

King Arthur thrashes in his death throes, the poison wracking his body as it breaks itself from within. Soon, the King's struggle ceases. A final RATTLE leaves King Arthur's throat.

ANGLE ON - Lancelot enters where Lady Guinevere stands over King Arthur's dead body. She is not alarmed to see him.

LADY GUINEVERE
The King is dead.

Lancelot comes to her side, staring down, emotionless, at the King body. Guinevere slips her hand into Lancelot's.

LADY GUINEVERE
I am free, my love.

IN THE KING'S BED CHAMBER

Guinevere strips off Lancelot's tunic and trousers as he lifts her dress up over her head --

They tumble into the furs of the King's expansive bed. Nude bodies intertwine, hungry hands grope at warm flesh...

AFTERWARDS

Guinevere nests comfortably in Lancelot's arms. Her eyes turn like wheels as she thinks, plots things out.

LADY GUINEVERE
Do you love me, Lancelot?

Lancelot turns, squinting at the question.

LANCELOT
I love you more than I do my own life, Guinevere.

These words, unlike most from Lancelot, are truly sincere.

INT. DRUID'S MONASTERY - NIGHT

The monastery is alive in hand-carved scrollwork and religious artifacts: stone statues, painted walls, wooden archways. A humbling, cavernous place. The corridors echo with the CHANTS and HYMNS of druids.

IN A CORRIDOR

A silhouette slips out of a niche, following a DRUID --

LANCELOT
Brother Culwych?

The Druid halts at the sound of his name. This pause gives the silhouette (LANCELOT) all he needs to know --

In a blur, a SWORD appears -- Lancelot grasps Culwych's shoulder and DRIVES THE SWORD through the base of his skull.

INT. GALAHAD'S QUARTERS - FIRST LIGHT

Dawn pierces through the openings of the Castle Camelot's outer walls. The blue-gray light of morning seeps into Galahad's personal quarters, where the Knight sleeps soundly.

Until there is a HEAVY IRON KNOCK at his door. Galahad is instantly on his feet and reaching for his sword --

THE DOOR OPENS TO REVEAL -- Mordred standing in the doorway, quiet and meek. Galahad recognizes that something is wrong --

GALAHAD

Mordred? What's happened?

MORDRED

I...

(changing his mind)

My father is dead, Galahad.

This news strikes Galahad like a warhammer.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - EARLY MORNING

A BELL TOLLS LOUDLY in mourning -- BONG, BONG, BONG --

Galahad strides through the castle's corridor, dressed in Pendragon heraldry and the leather jerkin of the Round Table; he is a military officer intent on performing his duty.

The bell TOLLS continuously, never stopping.

INT. THE KING'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Galahad parts a mob of CASTLE WORKERS and city militia to emerge into the King's private chambers. Inside --

LADY GUINEVERE weeps quietly over King Arthur's body.

THE ROUND TABLE KNIGHTS stand in a line, bare swords tip-down against the stone floor at their feet. Their hands rest on the crossguards. Their heads are bowed in mourning.

HOODED DRUIDS surround the chamber, praying in silence.

LADY GUINEVERE

Our mighty King has fallen, Sir
Galahad; his health failed him
during the night.

GALAHAD

(to the Round Table)

Why was I not summoned earlier?

LADY GUINEVERE

The Steward found him just before daybreak. He was coming to break our Grace's fast. At his alert, I sent Lancelot to summon The Six, but Mordred insisted on delivering you this dark news himself.

Lady Guinevere places a hand on Mordred's head, bringing him close to her body. The young boy just stares ahead vacantly.

LADY GUINEVERE

Our future King so admires you, Sir Galahad.

The wheels turn in Galahad's mind as he scans the room, collecting information, sorting it, creating hypotheses.

Galahad goes to Lady Guinevere.

GALAHAD

This is the blackest day of my knighthood, Your Grace. Know that I am in your service.

LADY GUINEVERE

As his First Knight, you were his Grace's most trusted man, Sir Galahad. So, too, are you mine.

Galahad rises, turning back to the task at hand.

A LARGE DRUID crouches over the King's body, going to work.

LADY GUINEVERE

Knights of the Round Table and servants of my gentle house, know that the King was ever deeply grateful for the quality of man that surrounded him.

GALAHAD WATCHES - the big druid working over the King's corpse, arranging him in preparation for the body's removal --

LADY GUINEVERE

Today you have lost a King. Today I have lost a husband and my son a father. My heart breaks with a melancholy which will not soon mend.

...the druid removes a swatch of parchment from inside his robe. With a tiny METAL TOOL, he scrapes residue from the King's mouth that he wipes onto the parchment. He folds the parchment and stuffs it back into his robe.

LADY GUINEVERE
 Your reluctant Queen asks for your
 compassion and guidance through
 this darkness so that we, as a
 united kingdom, may rise again,
 strong, in the dawn of a new era.

...the druid nods to his companions. *Take the King away.* They
 lift the King's body onto A LITTER and take it away.

He draws back his hood to address Lady Guinevere.

BROTHER MER'LIN (40s) is a dark-skinned Saracen with a gray
 eye and a brown one. His head, as is custom, is shorn bald.
 He wears a long goatee that is a shock of silver and black.

BROTHER MER'LIN
 The brothers will now prepare the
 King for the interment, my Lady.

At the sight of the Saracen Druid, Lady Guinevere darkens.

LADY GUINEVERE
 What is the meaning of this?

BROTHER MER'LIN
 I am Mer'Lin, a Druid brother to
 the Wise Ones of the Oak. I --

LADY GUINEVERE
 (enraged)
 -- Who has allowed Saracen filth
 into my royal chambers? Is this
 some type of cruel jest at the
 expense of our fallen King?

Galahad reaches out for Lady Guinevere, trying to calm her --

GALAHAD
 Your Grace --

-- She rips her arm away --

LADY GUINEVERE
 -- This savage has touched the
 King's body! Corrupted his mortal
 form before he has made the journey
 into the afterlife!
 (to her guards)
 GUARDS! Arrest this Saracen devil --

The guards hesitate -- Mer'Lin dons his hood, backing away --

BROTHER MER'LIN
 -- No need. I have angered my Lady.
 I will retire.

LADY GUINEVERE
Retire? I should have you hanged!

Mer'Lin speeds for the exit -- On his way, he spots: THE CORK from Lady Guinevere's phial. Quickly, Mer'Lin snatches it up. He sniffs at the cork on his way from the King's chamber --

Galahad has watched this. He wants to follow, but --

LADY GUINEVERE (O.S.)
Sir Galahad.

GALAHAD
Yes, Your Grace?

LADY GUINEVERE
See that the druids -- Albonese druids -- clean the King's body and have him prepared for burial. I want no holy rite passed over.

GALAHAD
Of course, Your Grace.

Lady Guinevere leaves them, storming away into one of her private chambers behind the solar.

The Round Table encircles Galahad, awaiting their orders.

CARADOC
What do you make of it, m'Lord?

GALAHAD
To be a King is to be surrounded by enemies. We must be vigilant.

LANCELOT
Arthur's enemy was time, Galahad.
He was an old man.

GALAHAD
Percival, did your watch yield anything of note last night?

Percival glances at Lancelot quickly before answering:

PERCIVAL
Nothing, my Lord.

MALAGANT
Our Lord Captain smells conspiracy.

Whether Malagant's quip is ironic or not, it cannot be said.

GALAHAD

One of us shall sleep while five
rotate castle patrols and personal
guard to the Queen and the Prince.
Percival, it was your guard last
night, so you are first to rest.

Percival shifts uncomfortably, looking again at Lancelot.

GALAHAD

Gawain, Lancelot, you are to escort
the Lady and Prince wherever they
go. Caradoc, Malagant, you are with
me for patrol. We will divide the
castle in thirds and seek what
witnesses we can find.

MALAGANT

(growling; annoyed)
Witnesses to what?

GALAHAD

The walls of Camelot whisper. We
must listen to what they say.

LANCELOT

They will whisper boring tales of
an aged King with a weak heart.
This is a waste of time, Galahad.

GALAHAD

Our sole duty was to guard the life
of a King who is now dead. Time is
something we suddenly have in
abundance.

Lancelot's smugness shows no sign of remorse or concern.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - LATER THAT DAY

Galahad pours over a seemingly bare wall.

He sweeps his hand over its surface until he finds a brick --
That he pushes into the wall -- A counterweight CLICK-CLICK-
CLICKS as a recess in the wall opens up, REVEALING A PASSAGE
between the castle walls.

INSIDE THE HIDDEN PASSAGE

Galahad holds up a torch, casting firelight into --

A NARROW HIDDEN CORRIDOR

Light pours inside from an adjacent room. Galahad wedges
himself into the tight corridor. The light's source is --

THE KING'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS

Which are visible on the other side of the wall through tiny slats that were carved into the brickwork.

ON THE FLOOR, there are a set of FOOTPRINTS in the grime. They appear fresh, like his. However, the other footprints are half the size of Galahad's.

INT. LADY GUINEVERE'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - DAY

The newly made Queen Guinevere searches a pile of parchment scrolls when the door to her chambers CREAKS open. She brightens when Lancelot slips inside. He stops. Smiles.

LANCELOT

It seems I am to guard my Lady.

(going to the Queen)

Galahad fears that assassins may be within our walls.

Lancelot sweeps a lock of hair from Guinevere's face.

LANCELOT

Though there is none more deadly than my gentle lady, hmm?

Grinning, he goes in for a kiss, but she catches his face. Livid and lethally serious:

LADY GUINEVERE

Mention that again and I will cut out your wagging tongue.

LANCELOT

But how would I pleasure my lady?

LADY GUINEVERE

A knight's talent lives in his sword --

Lady Guinevere GRABS Lancelot beneath his belt, dragging him close to her. He GRUNTS, half in pain, half in pleasure --

LADY GUINEVERE

Leave the tongue wagging to your Queen.

Guinevere holds eye-contact with Lancelot before dropping her gaze down to Lancelot's belt and her clenched grip...

LATER, IN THE QUEEN'S BED

Lancelot and Guinevere lie amongst furs in post-coital bliss.

LADY GUINEVERE
What does Galahad suspect?

LANCELOT
The man's sense of duty will keep Galahad awake for a month searching for an assassin that doesn't exist. But time will pass and the people of Camelot will come to accept that their beloved King has died of old age. Then, his generous Queen will grant him his retirement and send him home to his estate.

Lady Guinevere fusses with a corner of her fur blanket.

LADY GUINEVERE
There is a dream, one I have had since I was a girl, but it comes more often now.

(recalling the dream)
A lone Saracen stands in the shadows. I am unable to move. Then, just as it steps into the light where I can see its face, I am overwhelmed by this... feeling. And then I realize that I am dead.

Lancelot rolls onto his side. Runs his hand beneath the furs.

LADY GUINEVERE
They are coming for us, Lancelot. I know this.

LANCELOT
Mordred will not come of age for nearly two years. Plenty of time to start our war with Palamedes and the Qu'Rad, is it not?

Lady Guinevere turns to her lover and smiles.

EXT. THE CITY OF CAMELOT - NIGHT

A cloaked Galahad walks toward the towering Druid Monastery.

INT. DRUID'S MONASTERY - MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

Galahad comes inside to the HAUNTING BALLADS sung in the old tongue by the devotees of the Green Mother. He approaches a druid and sinks to his knees, bowing his head:

GALAHAD
I am Sir Galahad of Avalon, First
Knight of the Round Table.

Galahad sheds his hood, looking up at the druid.

GALAHAD
I seek Brother Mer'Lin.

The druid says nothing, but does offer a hand. *Come this way.*

INT. MER'LIN'S LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

Galahad's druid escort leads him into a basement room inside the monastery. The brother gestures inside, then leaves him.

INSIDE THE LABORATORY, there are a half dozen experiments in progress. Glass beakers hold liquids with white film caked on top. Tables are cluttered in tools and other things. CAGED ANIMALS, cats, dogs, birds, even monkeys, pace in captivity.

BROTHER MER'LIN sits stooped over one such worktable, immersed in some task. His back is to Galahad.

Cautiously, Galahad walks toward Mer'Lin. The druid examines something while wearing a strange contraption on his head -- They are LOOKING GLASSES that magnify his work --

BROTHER MER'LIN
(without looking up)
Welcome Sir Galahad, of the Round
Table: the common man that became
the King of Albion's first sword.
Your story is the stuff of legend.

Mer'Lin turns to Galahad, seeing him with HUGE, MAGNIFIED EYES through the looking glasses. The druid smiles a lot when he talks, like he has some kind of omniscience.

GALAHAD
I think the druid who breaks his
silence is of rarer legend.

BROTHER MER'LIN
We should all express our devotion
to the Green Mother in our own
ways. The man who does not speak
cannot question. And without
question...

(returning to his work)
Man cannot achieve understanding of
the great mysteries that face him --

MER'LIN'S LIPS are pursed against the end of a long needle --

It is aimed at an ELDERLY MAN'S eye, which is glazed over by a soft white film. The needle's tip punctures the man's cataract and Mer'Lin SUCKS IT OUT through the hollow syringe.

Turning, Mer'Lin SPITS the extracted residue onto the floor.

GALAHAD
(sotto)
Saracen savage.

BROTHER MER'LIN
The aging eye can sometimes grow a second lid that impairs vision.

(showing the needle)
I have found many practical uses for my "syringe." Sometimes these patients awake with twenty years removed from their aging sight. It is a hollow needle, created by one of my predecessors while I was learning medicine at the Central Praxeum of Mosul at the heart of the Qu'Rad Empire. The very beating heart of innovation in the world.

GALAHAD
Then why did you come North?

BROTHER MER'LIN
I witnessed things there that convinced me that my god did not exist. So, I sought out a new one.

Brother Mer'Lin smiles away painful memories.

BROTHER MER'LIN
Science is the greatest mystery that lies before man. I came North seeking answers to questions.

GALAHAD
What did you find?

BROTHER MER'LIN
More questions. And I believe it is questions that brings you here.
(off Galahad's silence)
The King's death unsettles you.

GALAHAD
It unsettles the whole of Albion.

BROTHER MER'LIN
But it is the circumstance of his death that has you cloaked and skulking around the city by night.

GALAHAD

Aye.

BROTHER MER'LIN

It should unsettle you, Sir Galahad
of the Round Table. For your King
was slain.

Though Galahad already knows, the truth knocks him back.

GALAHAD

By whom? What have you seen?

BROTHER MER'LIN

I have seen no more than you. Most
often, a King's murder leaves only
one witness.

(stands; *follow me*)

Of assassins, I possess no
knowledge. Of science, I do.

A SQUARE OF PARCHMENT sits on another worktable. It has a
smear of residue at its center.

Next to it, there is a phial containing a brackish brown
liquid. Mer'Lin shows Galahad the PHIAL.

BROTHER MER'LIN

Concentrated needlespore. Made from
the seeds of a needlesstalk, a
waterless plant that grows in the
desert sands. The seeds will burn
and numb the mouths of creatures
that try to feed on them. However,
when made into concentrate...

Brother Mer'Lin leads Galahad to a monkey's cage. The monkey
leaps about, SCREECHING and SHAKING the iron bars.

BROTHER MER'LIN

(to the monkey)

Easy, my friend. Easy.

Brother Mer'Lin uncorks the phial and holds it over the cage.
The monkey, expecting food, climbs up toward it --

A SINGLE DROPLET falls into the monkey's mouth. In seconds,
the monkey drops down to the floor of the cage. It THRASHES
about, HISSING and SCREAMING. The monkey slows, staggers and
finally collapses in a lifeless heap.

GALAHAD

Mother have mercy.

BROTHER MER'LIN

Needlespore is instantly deadly in any beast, including man. Easy to transport, nearly traceless.

GALAHAD

Nearly?

Brother Mer'Lin smiles. He opens the cage and removes the monkey, laying it down on the worktable. With a small metal tool, Mer'Lin takes a scraping from the monkey's mouth. He wipes the sample onto a square of parchment.

BROTHER MER'LIN

Simple spirits.

Brother Mer'Lin opens another phial. He drops alcohol onto the parchment with the needlespore sample. It foams on contact. He then lays out a second square of parchment --

BROTHER MER'LIN

This is a scraping I took from the King's mouth this morning.

Another drop of alcohol produces the same foaming result.

GALAHAD

This is your evidence?

Brother Mer'Lin picks up the phial of needlespore again. He holds it under Galahad's nose --

BROTHER MER'LIN

Inhale this. Not too close.

Carefully, Galahad sniffs at the phial. Even inches from his nose, the mere stench sends him reeling and COUGHING --

BROTHER MER'LIN

I discovered this cork near the King's body.

Brother Mer'Lin produces the small cork he found. Galahad takes it. Sniffs it and recoils again --

BROTHER MER'LIN

I had six phials of needlespore last night. This morning, I woke to five. It is rare and difficult to make. I use it to destroy my specimens for study because it corrupts the internal mechanisms the least of the known poisons.

GALAHAD

Who would have access to your
chambers?

Brother Mer'Lin leads Galahad to a stone slab large. A sheet
covers whatever lies on top. He pulls back the sheet --

BROTHER CULWYCH lies dead on the slab. A nasty SWORD WOUND
has erupted from his face between his nose and upper lip
where Lancelot ran him through.

BROTHER MER'LIN

This is Brother Culwych, one of my
initiates. Found in the monastery
corridor early this morning.

(looking up at Galahad)

I discovered a purse of fifty gold
pieces beneath a loose stone in his
quarters. Fifty gold. I suppose
every man has his price.

Galahad looks at Mer'Lin, the dead monkey, the body. He
calculates, sorts information, considers his options...

EXT. GALAHAD'S ESTATE - COURTYARD - DAY

A RIDER races down the hill toward Galahad's estate.

IN THE COURTYARD

Lynette, Galahad's wife, fusses in an expansive garden. The
sound of HOOVES gets her attention. Then --

SERVANT (O.S.)

Rider!

Dusting herself off, Lynette rushes out to meet the rider.

THE RIDER

Is from Camelot, wearing the Pendragon crest and colors.

LYNETTE

Is there news from Camelot?

MESSENGER RIDER

Aye. Dark news, my Lady.

Lynette is suddenly alarmed: No, not Galahad, no --

LYNETTE

What? What is it?

MESSENGER RIDER
The King, my Lady. His Grace has...
passed.

LYNETTE
Arthur is dead?

The rider dips his head. Aye.

LYNETTE
Do you carry any word from Sir
Galahad? A letter, perhaps?

MESSENGER RIDER
None, my Lady. But Sir Galahad
maintains his command of The Six
with great honor.

Lynette is heartbroken. She fakes a smile to thank him.

INT. ROYAL CRYPT - DUSK

MORGAN LA FEY, tiny and hooded, SINGS A DIRGE that fills the royal crypt with her otherworldly voice. She is the "Mother's Daughter," head of the Druid order. Firelight whips and flickers off the mausoleum's old stone walls.

KING ARTHUR PENDRAGON stands erect in his crypt.

Wearing full armor and heraldry, he has a DRAGON-CRESTED SHIELD between his arms and a sword gripped in his hands, pointed down at his feet.

Were this not a funeral, the King might look alive.

THE MOURNERS face the front of the crypt, all swathed in black. Queen Guinevere and Prince Mordred are at the head of the attending with The Round Table just behind them.

LATER, A STONE SLAB

Slides past the King's body, stone GRINDING on stone as the moving shadow consumes the last of the dancing firelight.

Then, the King's crypt is sealed.

EXT. THE STONEHENGE - NIGHT

Galahad approaches Sir Gawain, who appears even more gaunt in the moonlight where he is posted outside The Stonehenge.

GALAHAD
Mordred is within?

Gawain nods. His voice is a DRY GARGLE from disuse:

GAWAIN
Came to pray.

GALAHAD
Go ahead back. I will escort him
from here. Thank you, Sir Gawain.

Gawain offers a shallow bow before leaving Galahad.

INSIDE THE STONEHENGE

Galahad approaches Mordred, who still wears black mourning from his father's funeral. The boy recites a scripted prayer in the OLD TONGUE. Galahad startles him:

GALAHAD
You pray for forgiveness.

MORDRED
Galahad -- I -- I did not --

GALAHAD
Forgiveness for what, my Prince?

Galahad kneels beside Mordred, non-confrontational.

MORDRED
How do you define honor, Galahad?
Honor as you have taught me?

GALAHAD
Honor is being just, acting above
self, no matter the consequence.

Mordred releases a short SOB --

GALAHAD
What did you see, Mordred?

The boy CRIES softly beside Galahad. Gently, Galahad pursues:

GALAHAD
You were watching your father from
the siege passage that night. You
must tell me what you saw.

MORDRED
(crying)
She told him she would not have me
inherit a conquered throne...

Galahad lowers his gaze, the burden of this knowledge just beginning to weigh on him. *The Queen has murdered the King.*

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - OUTSIDE ROYAL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Percival stands post again outside the royal chambers. There are FOOTFALLS ascending the stairwell. Percival straightens -- GALAHAD emerges.

PERCIVAL

My Lord?

GALAHAD

Is anyone with you?

Percival is alert, sensing that something is afoot.

PERCIVAL

I'm alone, my Lord.

GALAHAD

I need you to meet me at twilight,
at the Stonehenge.

PERCIVAL

What is wrong, my Lord?

GALAHAD

Dress for travel. Come alone and
armed. Tell no one.

Galahad leaves Percival, heading back down the stairs.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Percival walks the corridors. He has direction and purpose. He stops at a door and KNOCKS. A moment passes --

THE DOOR OPENS with Lancelot standing on the other side.

LANCELOT

Percival? What bloody, Motherless
hour --

PERCIVAL

-- Galahad suspects something.

LANCELOT

Oh? And what might that be?

PERCIVAL

Why did you take my post the night
Arthur died?

LANCELOT

Arthur sent for me.

PERCIVAL

No page left his solar that night.

Lancelot smiles reassuringly. He walks out of his quarters, putting an arm around Percival and hugging him close.

LANCELOT

Come. I think we are all a little mad with grief, aren't we?

The gesture disarms Percival. Lancelot walks with him --

PERCIVAL

I think he suspects me, Lancelot.

LANCELOT

Our King has died and we, his knights of the Round Table, are blaming ourselves, thinking we could have done something to protect him.

Still walking, they approach a spiral stairwell --

LANCELOT

But no one could protect Arthur from what killed him. You and I shall go speak to Galahad together.

PERCIVAL

He asked me to come alone.

The steep stairwell is just a few feet away from them --

LANCELOT

Did he? And what did you tell him?

Lancelot stops Percival at the top of the steps. Percival turns around to face him. *What do you mean?*

PERCIVAL

There was nothing to tell, my Lord.

LANCELOT

(relieved)

Aye. Nothing to tell.

SUDDENLY - Lancelot raises his boot and KICKS Percival hard in the chest, sending him flailing backwards down the steep stone steps of the stairwell --

PERCIVAL'S HEAD is first to strike the steps and does so with a SOFT CRUNCH like a crushed melon.

Lancelot peers down after Percival. There is no movement.

EXT. THE STONEHENGE - NIGHT

Galahad, unarmed, waits inside the Stonehenge. He is dressed for travel a heavy cloak draped over his shoulders. He looks up. *Someone is coming.* He squints in the darkness --

A SILHOUETTE walks between a pair of the giant stones --

Galahad rises to his feet --

ANOTHER SILHOUETTE appears from behind another stone. Across from that one, a THIRD. It is LANCELOT, CARADOC and GAWAIN --

Galahad whirls, running for the other side of the stones.

OUTSIDE THE STONEHENGE

A saddled horse waits for Galahad, a sheathed sword slung across the black charger's back. Galahad runs for his horse --

BUT MLAGANT steps in front of him, knocking him down. Malagant draws his sword and points it at Galahad's throat --

MALAGANT

Never thought Galahad the Gallant
would turn traitor on us.

Malagant smiles down at him with his horrible, tattooed grin.

Lancelot, Gawain and Caradoc appear. They surround Galahad.

GALAHAD

Where is Percival?

LANCELOT

Percival tried to cut my throat, so
I broke his bloody neck. Why did he
come to my quarters accusing me of
treason, Galahad?

(re: the horse)

And where were you and he spirititing
off to this fine eve?

Galahad knows that he has been defeated. This FADES TO --

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - DUNGEON CELL - TIME UNKNOWN

Natural light is alien to this dismal stone cell. Rusted iron bars enclose Galahad within a six foot square cage. The lone furnishing is a CHAMBER POT that is full to flooding.

Galahad is dressed in a peasant's rags. Judging by his beard and hygiene, it's clear that he has been here for some time.

FOOTFALLS ECHO in the corridor outside Galahad's cell. He squints, torchlight coming closer to him in the darkness --

THE LADY GUINEVERE arrives at the head of a group assembled of Lancelot, Gawain, Caradoc and Malagant.

LADY GUINEVERE

Oh, Galahad. My heart aches to see my noble First Knight in such a state. But the news I bear cuts me even deeper.

Galahad looks up at her, but says nothing.

LADY GUINEVERE

The city guard completed their search of your quarters. Inside, they found this --

Lady Guinevere shows Galahad the GLASS PHIAL, still caked in the brown residue of the poison that killed the King.

LADY GUINEVERE

-- Poison. A coward's weapon. Do you wish to confess to your crimes this day, Galahad?

GALAHAD

Six times you have come here to ask that and six times I have turned you away, Your Grace.

LADY GUINEVERE

Perhaps it was Percival who committed the act and you were simply trying to help him escape?

GALAHAD

My answer has not changed. Will I see you again tomorrow, Your Grace?

LADY GUINEVERE

No. This cell will be empty tomorrow. You see, outside these castle gates, five thousand Britons have gathered to call for your traitorous head. And when it tumbles to them from the headsman's stone, you will have given them your confession, spoken or not.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY

Five thousand BRITONS, from the noble to the ragged poor, flood inside the Castle Camelot's outer walls.

A HEADSMAN patrols a raised wooden platform.

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

Lady Guinevere walks at the head of the four Round Table Knights. The knights surround Galahad, who is flanked on either side by a half dozen CITY GUARDSMEN.

THE YAWNING FRONT GATE awaits them where the sounds of the GATHERING MOB outside begin to waft inside --

GALAHAD

Use your wits, brothers. You know
that I did not do this.

The Round Table Knights stare straight ahead as they march.

LADY GUINEVERE

You waste your words, Galahad. You
cannot turn our most loyal knights
upon the crown as you did Percival.

GALAHAD

Ask yourselves why. Why would I
have slain the King?

Caradoc glances sidelong at Galahad. *Does he speak the truth?*

Lady Guinevere turns, halting the march to the castle gate.

LADY GUINEVERE

How great a fool do you take me
for, Galahad? Do you think I do not
speak to my son?

Galahad squints. *Mordred?*

LADY GUINEVERE

You have been counseling him for
years now as your squire. He has
told me of the seeds you planted
with him. Seeds that you hoped
would bear fruit once he is made
King. Land. Wealth. Titles. Power.
The gifts a King can provide are
nearly limitless, are they not?

Galahad stares back, horrified at her vicious lies.

LADY GUINEVERE

(addressing the group)

Have no illusions, Knights of the
Round Table: Sir Galahad's vile
crimes were meticulously planned.

(looking right at Galahad)

LADY GUINEVERE (CONT'D)

Galahad designed every facet of our good King's fate. And now, he will pay for his unspeakable treason.

Lady Guinevere spins on a heel, starting the march again --

As Galahad walks, he eyes a particular HANGING TAPESTRY on the corridor wall to his right. He looks ahead. Only a hundred feet now stand between him and his doom --

The group's march comes even with the tapestry --

Galahad grasps the dirk (a shortsword) of the CITY GUARDSMAN marching on his left -- As he pulls it free from its sheathe, Galahad thrusts his boot into the guard marching at his right, sending him CRASHING into the corridor wall --

Galahad tears down the tapestry, revealing an IRON LEVER hidden behind it -- He pulls the lever -- COUNTERWEIGHTS CRANK behind the wall as a hidden passage SLIDES OPEN --

Lancelot is first to draw his sword in the chaos --

LADY GUINEVERE

Stop him!

Malagant reaches out an arm to stop him from escaping -- Galahad BASHES it with the dirk's hilt -- Malagant SNARLS --

Galahad spins and PARRIES Lancelot's descending sword slash -- CLANG! -- Galahad races toward the HIDDEN PASSAGE --

Lancelot is right at his heels -- He lunges, SLASHING at Galahad's back, opening a DIAGONAL WOUND from Galahad's shoulder to his hip just as he vanishes into the PASSAGE --

The COUNTERWEIGHT CLICK-CLACK-CLICK-CLACKS as Galahad throws the lever inside the passage to close the stone door --

Malagant ROARS and shoves the pursuing Lancelot aside as he dives into the opening after Galahad -- But not fast enough.

The heavy stone door CLOSES against Malagant, pinning him between the moving door and the stone wall -- His steel breastplate CRUMPLES against his chest -- Malagant HOWLS --

LANCELOT

Get him out of there!

Two guardsmen go to Malagant -- But Malagant the Mad is frothing from the lips, wild-eyed with pain, wrath and unbridled insanity --

LANCELOT

No! The lever, you idiots!

-- Too late. Malagant grabs a guard's head with his free arm and BASHES his face into the stone wall, CRUSHING his skull.

As the second guard tries to escape from Malagant's range, Malagant palms his face and twists it, SNAPPING his neck --

Caradoc runs to the lever and PULLS it, opening the passage door again -- CLICK-CLACK-CLICK-CLACK --

Malagant PUSHES the heavy stone door off his chest and collapses to his knees. His steel breastplate is CAVED IN.

Lancelot steps around Malagant and the two dead guards into --

THE HIDDEN PASSAGE

Where TUNNELS disappear into infinity. And Galahad is gone.

IN THE CORRIDOR

Lancelot returns to the aftermath of Galahad's escape -- Two dead guards. Two more injured. Malagant's injury. His crushed breastplate. The Lady Guinevere's quiet rage.

LADY GUINEVERE

(calm fury)

Sir Lancelot, I am promoting you to First Knight. You may command the search from my chambers. Start by sending every city guardsman in the castle into that passage.

(to Gawain)

Sir Gawain, seal off the castle and close the city gates. No one enters or leaves Camelot until Galahad is found.

A CHANT rises from the gathered mob in the courtyard --

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD - SAME TIME

The crowd CLAPS their hands and STOMPS feet and staves in rhythm with the loud CHANT they direct at the HEADSMAN --

EXT. CASTLE ROOF - SAME TIME

Galahad skulks along the Castle Camelot's rooftop.

He slows to a stop, wincing in pain. Peers over the edge --

THE CROWD BELOW chants: "Blood! Blood! Blood!" --

Galahad crouches down. Gingerly, he peels his bloody tunic away from the NASTY SWORD WOUND running across his back.

Galahad ties the ruined shirt around his waist, creating a makeshift sword belt where he holsters his STOLEN DIRK.

EXT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - DAY

The castle portcullis, a snarling jaw of heavy black iron, makes its slow descent until the gate's teeth bite into a recessed stone channel below. The castle gate is sealed.

EXT. THE CITY OF CAMELOT - DUSK

The city of Camelot is aglow in the final orange embers of daylight as the sun dips behind the mountains to the west.

ONE BY ONE, the city's FOUR POSTERN GATES are closed and sealed. Fortified as if against an invading army's siege.

Galahad is now trapped inside the City of Camelot.

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - CASTLE PASSAGES - NIGHT

Galahad moves from tunnel to passage to tunnel, through the interior walls of the castle. A torch lights his way as --

He SLOSHES through a puddle of ground water that has collected in a passage. Galahad stops, turns his back to the puddle and holds out the torch, lighting HIS REFLECTION --

Galahad grimaces. This wound will kill him if not treated.

The SOUND OF SOLDIERS nearby -- He gathers himself, moves --

LATER, IN ANOTHER TUNNEL

Galahad feels his way along, trying to recall the direction of these tunnels from memory.

LATER, IN A NARROW PASSAGE

Galahad watches through tiny slats carved into the wall of the Lady Guinevere's bedchamber --

INSIDE: Galahad sees Guinevere nude and mounted atop someone. She CRIES OUT in ecstasy. The man spins her onto her back --

IT IS LANCELOT.

Galahad turns away, *how could I have not seen this before?*

INT. KING'S SOLAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Gawain, Caradoc and Malagant enter the royal solar where Lancelot stands guard beside Lady Guinevere.

LADY GUINEVERE
You have not found Galahad.

MALAGANT
The castle is a bloody spider's
nest of tunnels. He could be
anywhere.

LADY GUINEVERE
Thank you, Malagant. Your utility
to the crown continues to be the
stuff of legend.

Malagant spits.

CARADOC
Your Grace, surely someone must
possess knowledge of Camelot's
interior. Some castle knight, or --

LANCELOT
-- Arthur refused to employ the
passages during his reign. His
Grace did not... care for the
confined spaces. The soldiers from
Uther's rule are long gone.

LADY GUINEVERE
Who else? A *mesnie* of the city
guard? One of Galahad's former men?

Gawain CACKLES a hard laugh.

LANCELOT
What are you laughing about?

GAWAIN
One of them was Uther's man.

LANCELOT
And?

GAWAIN
Malagant brained the man inside his
own helmet while Galahad escaped.

Lancelot and Guinevere look to Malagant. *Why him of all -- ?*

MALAGANT
Fuck. Him.

LANCELOT
It is all moot. I laid blade to
flesh. An inch closer and it would
have bled Galahad already.

LANCELOT (CONT'D)

With luck, the wound will fester
and he will die within the castle
walls like a starved rat.

LADY GUINEVERE

I want that traitor's head. And if
I cannot have his, I will have
another. Find him.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - NIGHT

CITY MILITIA march through the castle, looking behind
tapestries, searching for hidden switches or levers --

INT. HIDDEN PASSAGE - NIGHT

Galahad struggles to stay on his feet. Wracked with pain and
exhaustion, every movement is a struggle.

But there are FOOTSTEPS near. Close. Very close. Galahad
smothers his torch. The fire HISSES on cold stone.

He feels around for something -- Then, he puts his hand on --

A DEEP NICHE dug into the wall, almost like the slab for a
coffin in a crypt. Galahad ducks into the niche.

The FOOTFALLS are close. TORCHLIGHT rounds the corner --

Inside the niche, Galahad has to lie flat on his back to
shimmy deeper within so he won't be seen -- He bites his lip
in agony as he grates his wounded back against the stone --

Moments later, GAWAIN passes by the niche with a group of
city guardsmen. Torchlight illuminates Galahad's arm...

... But no one sees him. They are gone. Shivering from
sickness, Galahad slowly drifts into fevered sleep...

EXT. GALAHAD'S ESTATE - TRAINING YARD - DAY (DREAM)

The white-washed images of Galahad's fevered memory...

Lucan's face is drenched in sweat. He SLASHES forward with a
training sword, one that has been blunted for practice. His
opponent is Galahad, who easily DEFLECTS the slash --

GALAHAD

Move your feet, Lucan. Your power,
your speed, your balance -- they
are all born from good footwork.

Lucan takes the instruction, sets his feet.

LUCAN

Let us play at roles now; make this interesting.

GALAHAD

Sir Galahad of Avalon is not compelling enough an opponent for his own son?

ANGLE ON - Lynette watches, laughing at Galahad.

LUCAN

I favor the Uther Pendragon II's Battle of Wager, accused of treason by his son Lord Mordred I. Trial by combat; father against son.

GALAHAD

You do recall who was judged guilty before the eyes of the Goddess?

Lucan prepares a slash -- he comes at Galahad, grinning --

LUCAN

Aye -- Mordred slew his father in three moves!

CLANG! -- Galahad deflects the blow with a quick parry --

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - SIEGE TUNNELS - DAY

-- CLANG! Galahad, pale and sickly, runs stiffly through a passage. Every few yards, he looks over his shoulder --

The METAL SOUNDS OF SOLDIERS pursue -- Galahad turns into another tunnel --

Moments later, THREE CITY GUARDSMEN run past. Galahad feels around in the dark, pawing his way forward --

INT. CIRCULAR CHAMBER - DAY

The morning sun lances into the halls of the Castle Camelot. At the castle's center stands a spiral tower to which all corridors connect. In the tower, there are square portholes cut into the tall stone structure.

MALAGANT walks out of a corridor, stops at one of these holes and pisses into it --

INT. LATRINE - CONTINUOUS

Malagant's urine trickles down the waste-slicked latrine --

GALAHAD crouches at the edge of this filthy channel. Covered in grime from his journey, he looks ill from the stench. But he looks back to where he came from. *This is the only way.*

As Galahad squeezes himself inside the center channel, his head spins with pain, dehydration, exhaustion... the awful stench... Galahad GAGS, vomiting into the latrine --

He presses forward, arms and legs splayed to support him in the channel -- But he slips, SLAMMING his wounded back -- Galahad SCREAMS, now SLIDING on his bare back against the stone as he slides down the channel coated in piss and shit --

Galahad finally catches himself, stopping his slide.

AT THE SHAFT'S OUTLET

Galahad sees daylight filtering inside the channel. He picks up his pace, heading for the outside light. At the end sits --

AN IRON GRATE, blocking the latrine channel's exit.

GALAHAD

My kingdom for some bloody luck.

Galahad KICKS the grate in a rage -- and the iron gives a little. Encouraged, he reaches for his holstered dirk --

And he goes to work, SAWING the corroding iron where years of exposure to human waste has eaten at the metal.

LATER, NIGHT HAS FALLEN

And still Galahad works. The dirk's blade is worn, chipped and broken from sawing at the corroded iron for hours. Galahad is but steps away from death, pushed to the limits.

His hand is wrapped tight in the ruined shirt that he had used as a belt. He takes off the wrapping to look at his hand, which is BLISTERED AND RAW.

Galahad tucks the hand under his armpit and cocks his leg to kick the grate --

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE CAMELOT - NIGHT

The circular grate BLASTS out of the latrine -- It SPLASHES into a putrid, shallow CESSPOOL sitting below.

EXT. THE CITY OF CAMELOT - NIGHT

Galahad runs away from the castle, up a steep hill and into the heart of the city where scattered fires light the dark --

INT. DRUID'S MONASTERY - NIGHT

Galahad stumbles into the front hall of the monastery.

A DRUID, seeing Galahad's trouble, comes over to him.

GALAHAD

I would like to see Brother
Mer'Lin.

And Galahad collapses. This FADES TO --

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE CAMELOT - DAY

-- The afternoon sun beats down on the cess pool sitting beneath the drain dumping sewage from the castle.

A SQUADRON OF CITY GUARDS stands by the pooled human waste.

LANCELOT crests the rise, coming down the hill to join them.

LANCELOT

What have you found, Sergeant?

The Sergeant of the City Guard points at the open drain, which is missing its grate. Lancelot shrugs like, *so what?*

SERGEANT

There ain't no grate on the drain,
my Lord. All the drains have
grates. They was put in at the
Master of Grounds' orders. In case
of seige.

LANCELOT

Did you find the grate?

SERGEANT

No, my Lord. 'Tis probably
somewhere in the... [cesspool]

Lancelot is repulsed. He takes a big step away from the bog.

LANCELOT

Do tell me, Sergeant, when you are
ready to search for evidence that
Galahad has escaped the castle. I
would like to have some proof to
share with the Queen before sending
200 swords into the homes of our
city's peaceful denizens.

The Sergeant stares stupidly back at Lancelot.

LANCELOT

Get thine self into the shit pool,
Sergeant.

The less-than-thrilled Sergeant wades into the cesspool.

LANCELOT

The rest of you as well.

More reluctant men trudge one-by-one into the fetid bog --

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - KING'S SOLAR - DAY

Lady Guinevere peers down at the filthy, kneeling SERGEANT, who holds up Galahad's stained, RUINED DIRK as proof of Galahad's escape. She wrinkles her nose at the stench of him.

LADY GUINEVERE

It appears Sir Galahad has slipped through your net, Sir Lancelot.

Lancelot keeps his distance like the Sergeant is contagious.

LADY GUINEVERE

Take The Green Knight off his post with Mordred. Each of you take a squadron of foot into the city. Galahad may have escaped my castle, but he cannot escape my city.

(to the Sergeant)

Sergeant, have my servants give you a hot bath. Instruct them to burn your clothes.

SERGEANT

Yes, Your Grace.

LANCELOT

And if that should fail to remedy this stench, you might ask them to burn you, as well.

INT. DRUID'S MONASTERY - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

This dank room is the hospital, but it may be better suited as the workshop of a madman. Sick beds occupy half the room. The other half is a work area cluttered with medical tools and a dozen dead creatures that are pickled in glass jars.

ANGLE ON - Galahad rests in a medicated sleep.

SUDDENLY - COMMOTION -- Boots STOMPING on stone, chainmail shirts RUSTLING and drawn swords RATTLING in mailed grips --

MER'LIN appears, rushing into the room -- He drags Galahad out of his drugged slumber onto unsteady feet --

BROTHER MER'LIN
Soldiers! Onto the bier! Quickly!

Galahad rolls onto a STONE SLAB.

Mer'Lin throws a heavy woolen blanket over him.

MOMENTS LATER - Lancelot strides into the room at the lead of a half dozen CITY MILITIA.

Brother Mer'Lin looks up from a slop bucket where he washes his hands. He grabs a cloth towel and draws back his hood --

BROTHER MER'LIN
Ah, what aid can I provide to the Queen's Round Table?

LANCELOT
(to his men)
Search it.
(back to Mer'Lin)
I hunt the fugitive Galahad.

BROTHER MER'LIN
(hanging his head)
An ignoble deed. To slay his own King. The Shadows surely await him.

Suspicious, Lancelot scans the room. He watches as his men open closet and cabinet doors and look under beds --

LANCELOT
He was injured in his escape.
Perhaps mortally. You have not treated him?

BROTHER MER'LIN
My beds have been overwhelmed with tradesmen injuries, toothaches and old age of late, but no healthy soldiers have entered here. You have visited the castle infirmary?

Ignoring him, Lancelot begins to search the room himself. He soon lays eyes on the STONE BIER where Galahad is hidden.

Brother Mer'Lin watches as Lancelot reaches for the blanket --

BROTHER MER'LIN (O.S.)
I would not, my Lord!

-- Lancelot freezes where he stands --

BROTHER MER'LIN
Plague has surfaced again in the
marshlands of Wandesboro.

Lancelot quickly backs away from Galahad's "corpse," shaken,
not knowing what to do or where to go --

BROTHER MER'LIN
"The creeper" is a virulent enemy.
Transmission is swift. I of course
have taken every precaution...

Mer'Lin towels wet blood off his hands. The sight of the gore
is too much for Lancelot. He cannot wait to leave the room --

LANCELOT
We shall, ah, continue the search
in the upper halls.

Lancelot pushes through his men -- He is the first one out of
the room. His soldiers follow close behind.

ANGLE ON - Galahad is on his feet, visible again. All of this
takes quite a bit of effort. He wavers, unsteady. Mer'Lin
rushes over to offer himself as human crutch --

BROTHER MER'LIN
We among the living welcome you
back, Sir Galahad.

Mer'Lin helps Galahad back to his sickbed.

BROTHER MER'LIN
I almost lost you. I had to keep
you unconscious with an opium
sponge so that your body's every
resource could battle the wound's
corruption.
(signals "turn around")
Please, sit.

Brother Mer'Lin examines Galahad's wound, which has been
covered in matted wool that looks like a green mud. He peels
a tiny corner away to expose ANGRY RED FLESH beneath --

Galahad recoils, COUGHING at a sudden smell --

GALAHAD
What is that stench?

BROTHER MER'LIN
The sulfur salts counteract the
adulteration of the flesh.

Mer'Lin covers the wound and pats Galahad on the shoulder.

BROTHER MER'LIN

It seems to be on the mend. Another week or so and you will be nearly recovered --

Galahad is not staying a week. He's already on his feet -- Looking for clothes, boots --

GALAHAD

-- Your kindness will not soon be forgotten. But I am not safe here and you are not safe having me.

BROTHER MER'LIN

And what do you mean to do? Storm the gates yourself? Demand a confession from the Queen?

GALAHAD

I will leave the city and make for Avalon. Lord Pellinore will hear my case and I will return with his support and sufficient force to depose Guinevere and install Mordred as the rightful King.

Brother Mer'Lin, though unaggressive, blocks Galahad's exit -- Galahad tries to muscle around him, but is overcome by the effort and stumbles, crashing to the ground --

BROTHER MER'LIN

Stay. Rest. Regain your strength. You will find as much safety here as you will anywhere within the city walls. And with those barred and sealed by Lady Guinevere to both ingress and egress until you are found, the monastery is your best option for shelter.

GALAHAD

It is not shelter I seek.

BROTHER MER'LIN

Of course not. Like any soldier with cock and steel, you seek revenge.

Galahad forces himself back to his feet. Unsteady --

GALAHAD

No. Only justice.

BROTHER MER'LIN

The distinction matters little. Each is won in blood.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE CAMELOT - NIGHT

Lancelot shepherds his empty-handed search party up the stone bridge leading to the castle gates.

HORSE HOOVES beat the earth behind him -- Louder and LOUDER -- They are heading right for them --

Hands move to swords. Lancelot remains calm.

A SINGLE RIDER, an Albonese Scout, rides up to meet them. The young lad (20) is travel worn, tired and haggard.

LANCELOT

What invisible fiend might my Lord pursue so fiercely into Camelot?

SCOUT

Piss off, grunt. 'Tis the Queen's business.

LANCELOT

Aye, which oft lands in the lap of her First Knight. What news, scout?

SCOUT

(squinting in the dark)

My Lord Galahad?

LANCELOT

Twice the sword and half the nuisance to our Lady Queen, I'm afraid. It is "your Lord" Lancelot to whom you speak.

SCOUT

M-my apologies, my Lord, I did not recognize my mighty Lord in the --

LANCELOT

-- Save your back-tracking and flattery for someone who cares. What news do you bring?

The scout offers a baleful look.

SCOUT

Saracens, my Lord. Raiding the White Valley, burning as they go.

Lancelot's eyes go ablaze with anger. He signals to the scout, *follow me*. Together, they file into the castle --

The gate descends behind them -- KA-CHUNK --

EXT. GALAHAD'S ESTATE - TRAINING YARD - DAY

-- CLANG! On the grounds of Galahad's expansive estate --

A MUSCULAR BOY spars, SWORD-ON-SWORD, against the house's MASTER-AT-ARMS, (45) a grizzled old codger with once brown hair that is now chased in white.

MASTER-AT-ARMS
Move your bloody feet!

The boy does so -- He evades -- The boy spins behind Master-at-Arms, SLAPPING his ass with the flat of his sword --

MASTER-AT-ARMS
You're an insufferable little shit,
Lucan. But you have the makings of
a gifted swordsman. Your father
would be proud.

Lucan (now 12), Galahad's growing son, bows.

LUCAN
Perhaps I will be as good as him.

SERVANT (O.S.)
Master Lucan! Riders!

The boy cannot run fast enough to find out whom --

ON A HIGH HILL

Lucan scampers up the hill to see into the valley below. Hope wilts away into horror as he sees the riders clearly --

SARACENS -- Twenty, maybe more -- Heading straight for them.

Lucan whirls, running back down into the yard --

ANGLE ON - Breathless, Lucan finds the Master-at-Arms collecting their training equipment. Weapons, armor.

MASTER-AT-ARMS
Lucan, come and help me --

LUCAN
-- SARACENS!

The Master-at-Arms looks dismissive at first, but then sees the boy is not stopping --

MASTER-AT-ARMS
Bows. Arrows. Quickly!

AT THE FRONT OF THE ESTATE

The Saracen raiding party storms down the hill in a tempest of THUNDER and rising dust. These raiders are dressed in azure and gold. They are uniformed. These men are the soldiers of an organized army. THE LEADER holds up the pack with a hand. They survey the quiet estate. Nothing moves.

LEAD SARACEN
(subtitled)
These men worship the earth at our feet. Help them find their gods.

As the Leader turns his horse -- ZIIIIIP! -- An arrow slices through the air, spearing a Saracen through the chest --

The Leader bellows a BATTLE ULULATION -- "ATTACK!" -- And so begins the charge right for the estate --

INT. GALAHAD'S ESTATE - SECOND FLOOR - SAME TIME

Lucan is crouched at a window down the hall from the Master-at-Arms. Both wield longbows --

ANGLE ON - Lynette appears from an adjoining room --

LYNETTE
Lucan, we must flee!

LUCAN
Hide, mother!

LYNETTE
Lucan!

MASTER-AT-ARMS
Do what the boy says, my Lady! The savages are a-comin' for us --
(to Lucan)
-- Make each arrow count, Lucan.
Look through your target and --

ZIP! Lucan's arrow finds a charging Saracen --

MASTER-AT-ARMS
-- Fletch the bastards!

Lucan and the Master-at-Arms rip off ARROW after ARROW, some finding their home, some not --

ON THE FIRST FLOOR

CRASH! A Saracen rider crashes through the splintered front door on horseback --

A SERVANT appears from the kitchen, wielding a WOOD-AXE --
The man, clearly not a fighter, takes a swing at the Saracen,
who CHOPS OFF the top of the servant's head --

Grinning, the Saracen dismounts and goes looking for trouble when -- THE MASTER-AT-ARMS appears wielding a hand-axe and a longsword -- He buries the hatchet in the Saracen's skull and then cuts him down -- CRASH! --

-- The Master-at-Arms turns to find Saracens pouring in through a ruptured wall in the house -- He's all alone --

Flashing scimitars meet the Master-at-Arms' hand-axe and sword -- He fights valiantly, but they are too much --

His axe-hand is cut off at the shoulder -- A scimitar bursts through his belly, cutting him from navel to shoulder --

The Saracens toss his corpse aside and head for the stairs --

INT. MASTER BEDCHAMBER - SAME TIME

Lucan stands in front of his mother wielding a longsword. Protective. Fearless. Just as his father would want. WHAM!

The barred door shivers, dust falling away from it like snow.

LYNETTE

Lucan!

LUCAN

I will not let them harm you.

WHAM! The door shakes again. This time, it gives a little.

Lucan licks his lips. His eyes widen. The boy is terrified.

WHAM! The door splinters open -- Three Saracens rush into the room, the first turning his sword to attack -- But he sees the very young Lucan, and he hesitates --

So Lucan runs his sword through the Saracen's gut -- THEN --

A ULULATING CALL rises from the yard outside -- In a moment, the Saracens are gone, answering the call --

Lucan and Lynette gape at one another. *Are we saved?* Lucan goes over to examine his KILL. He looks at the WOUND, then at his BLOODY SWORD... and drops to his knees and WRETCHES.

EXT. COURTYARD - SAME TIME

The Saracen raiding party scatters as a WEDGE OF MOUNTED RIDERS FROM CAMELOT RUMBLES down the hill toward them --

ANGLE ON - LANCELOT and MALAGANT ride at the head of the charge -- The cavalry strikes the Saracens fleeing on foot -- TEARING BODIES APART and TRAMPLING THEM beneath hooves --

Malagant charges off to give chase to the horsed Saracens --

While Lancelot dismounts to deal with the raiders on foot.

Two Saracens approach the smiling Lancelot, who is already buzzing with a battle high -- He meets a SLASH -- Parries, twisting -- And pulls away causing the other Saracen accidentally to cut open his comrade --

LANCELOT

My deepest thanks.

Stunned, the Saracens stares stupidly at the untouched Lancelot, who grins -- STEEL FLASHES -- Swish-swish -- Two blinding fast cuts slice into the Saracen's skull -- The top two thirds of his skull slough away in opposite directions.

ANGLE ON - Malagant rides hard after a Saracen fleeing on horseback -- He gains ground on the slower horse -- Raises his gigantic sword -- And severs the horse's rear leg --

The crippled horse immediately folds beneath its rider -- It CRASHES to the ground beneath Malagant's still-charging warhorse, which stomps a MONSTROUS HOOF right through the fallen rider's skull --

WHAM! Malagant is hit with a flail, sending him tumbling off his own mount -- The giant man rolls to a stop on the ground and is immediately on his feet, much to the surprise of the SARACEN who unhorsed him -- The Saracen charges --

Behind Malagant -- ANOTHER SARACEN SCREAMS, charging wildly at him -- Malagant side-steps the charge, cutting through the Saracen's mid-section, severing his torso from the waist-up --

The Saracen's top half sails toward his flail-wielding comrade -- The severed torso, still clutching a scimitar and SCREAMING, buries its sword into the other charging Saracen. This leaves both of them dead.

ANGLE ON - Lucan and Lynette race from Galahad's estate, which is now BEING CONSUMED IN FLAMES --

The rout is on. The Saracens the soldiers of Camelot have not killed are fleeing into the surrounding woodlands.

ANGLE ON - Lancelot, mounted again, charges toward Lynette -- Then right past her to cut down another Saracen -- Lancelot brings his horse about and offers out a hand to Lynette --

LANCELOT

With me, my Lady!

Lynette takes Lancelot's hand. He pulls her into his saddle.

ANGLE ON - Lucan, sword held at his side, stands frozen in place as he watches the raging blaze devour his home.

Malagant rides up behind him, reaches down and pulls the boy into his saddle with a single hand.

LANCELOT'S MEN form up and charge North toward Camelot --

INT. DRUID'S MONASTERY - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Inside the monastery hospital, Mer'Lin changes Galahad's wound's dressing. The flesh is raw but appears to be healing.

BROTHER MER'LIN
The will of the flesh is a wondrous thing, Sir Galahad.

A DRUID appears behind Mer'Lin. The Saracen turns around and receives a rolled piece of parchment from the druid --

Mer'Lin reads it, looks up at Galahad. *Mother have mercy.*

GALAHAD
What is it?

BROTHER MER'LIN
Your wife and son are now in the custody of the Lady Guinevere.

Galahad is already on his feet, looking around for supplies --

GALAHAD
I need clothes, boots and a sword.

BROTHER MER'LIN
Yes, and a wizard to turn you invisible. I do not doubt your skill, Galahad, but what you aim to do is folly.

GALAHAD
(stopping; intense)
The woman has my family, Mer'Lin.

THE MESSENGER quietly withdraws. Mer'Lin watches him go --

BROTHER MER'LIN
Perhaps it is not a wizard you require.

Galahad boils where he stands, eager for blood.

INT. LADY GUINEVERE'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - DAY

Lancelot strides across Lady Guinevere's private chambers. He finds her writing with quill and ink at her desk.

LANCELOT

Lady Lynette and her son are settled in the guest quarters.

(a pause)

Those were Palamedes' men who raided Galahad's estate.

LADY GUINEVERE

That Saracen viper smells weakness in Camelot. He is testing us to see how we will react... Tell me, what has your search for Galahad yielded?

LANCELOT

The man is a bloody phantom.

LADY GUINEVERE

Is it possible he is already dead?

LANCELOT

Even Galahad's corpse would not rest until it saw his duty carried out.

Lady Guinevere is not amused.

LADY GUINEVERE

I must have the traitor's corpse, animated or rotting, before I can assemble the war council and bring the battle to Palamedes. I cannot call the Lords of Albion to Camelot with Galahad skulking around inside my castle walls.

LANCELOT

Camelot's walls are unscalable and the gates are double-sealed. We will find him, alive or dead.

She rises from her seat to meet Lancelot's eyes.

LADY GUINEVERE

When I was a girl in Lyonesse, there was a cougar preying on my father's livestock. He had his huntsmen searching day and night for the beast, but they could not find it.

LADY GUINEVERE (CONT'D)

Do you know how my father at last
seized the creature?

(off Lancelot)

He found the cougar's den. She was
carrying back the sheep and goats
to feed her cubs. My father bled
four of them to put their scent in
the air. The final cub he carried
out into the woods and strangled.
The cries of her dying offspring
brought the mother immediately back
to the den where my father and his
men were waiting.

Lancelot is aghast from this revelation.

LANCELOT

That is why you had me bring
Galahad's family here? To bait him?

LADY GUINEVERE

I wish only to restore order to the
high seat of Albion, my love.

Lancelot is shaken by the extent of the Queen's evil.

EXT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - FRONT GATE - NIGHT

DOUBLE PARALLEL LINES OF DRUIDS hike up a steep incline
toward Camelot's forboding black iron gate.

TWO PIKEMAN wielding huge halberds block their way.

PIKEMAN

Sorry, Brothers. No one comes in or
out. Queen's orders.

While the pikemen are distracted...

ANGLE ON - A lone druid runs amidst the shadows of this
moonless night, beneath the castle bridge, up the steep slope
on the other side and on his way to the castle itself --

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - GUEST QUARTERS - NIGHT

Lynette, Galahad's wife, paces the well-adorned and lavishly
furnished guest quarters where she and Lucan are held.

Lucan watches her as she paces.

LUCAN

Why haven't we seen father yet?

LYNETTE

I don't know, Lucan.

LUCAN

Why is there a guard posted outside
the door?

LYNETTE

I don't know, Lucan.

LUCAN

Why are we here?

LYNETTE

I don't know, Lucan!

Boots MARCH up outside the door. They SLIDE SOFTLY to a stop.

CREEEAAAAAK -- The door eases open to reveal --

MALAGANT. All 7 feet of the tattooed madman glowers down at Lynette. He does not take his eyes off her.

And she knows why he's here.

LYNETTE

Lucan, go out into the hall.

LUCAN

Mother?

LYNETTE

Go. Now.

Malagant closes the door behind him and SLAMS DOWN the iron bar to LOCK it from the inside.

MALAGANT

The boy stays.

Tears form in Lynette's eyes, but she fights them back. She cocks back her hand -- Swings wildly to slap Malagant --

But Malagant palms her hand -- He spins her around and pushes her face down into the bed furs --

His tattooed skull grinning, Malagant advances on Lynette.

INT. TUNNELS BENEATH CAMELOT - SAME TIME

Hunched, Galahad slinks inside a narrow tunnel. His boots SLOSH in the water that has collected in the tunnel's trough.

IN ANOTHER TUNNEL

Galahad looks up to see BOOTS MARCHING across a grate in one of the castle's central arteries. When they are gone, he positions himself to peer --

THROUGH THE GRATE: Galahad sees nothing and no one, but the view has a number of blind-spots.

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - MAIN CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

THE GRATE lifts up as Galahad strains under the weight of the iron and the agony of it pressing against his sword wound --

The grate tips over, RINGING loudly on the corridor's floor.

Galahad hoists himself out of the hole and into the castle. Still in a crouch, Galahad hears --

YOUNG GUARDSMAN (O.S.)

Halt!

Galahad (still disguised as a druid) freezes in his crouch.

A YOUNG CITY GUARDSMAN is alone on his patrol.

YOUNG GUARDSMAN

Rise. Slow now, brother.

Galahad does as told. He rises and turns, his face hidden. The guardsman approaches him cautiously, sword drawn.

YOUNG GUARDSMAN

Show yourself, druid.

His hooded head shakes back and forth. No.

YOUNG GUARDSMAN

Show your face to me or I shall be forced to cut you down.

Galahad makes no move.

GALAHAD

(whispering)

Damn you, boy. Do not do this.

YOUNG GUARDSMAN

Did you just speak? What did you --

The young guardsman reaches for Galahad's hood, but Galahad moves in a blur, shoving the boy into the corridor wall --

The guardsman ROARS, coming at Galahad full bore -- Slashes his sword in hopes of dealing a lethal blow --

Galahad dips and dodges, avoiding the blade -- Galahad is better, but the young guardsman does possess some skill --

Galahad drops into a stance, a CURVED SCIMITAR flashing from beneath his druid's robes -- The boy frowns, that sword...

YOUNG GUARDSMAN

A Saracen?

The boy attacks -- The swords MEET! -- Again Galahad shoves him away, but again the guardsman attacks -- And Galahad runs the scimitar straight through the boy's gut.

Galahad kneels beside the dead guardsman and draws back the hood of his robe. Underneath, Galahad wears the tiny goatee of a druid initiate. The rest of his face and head have been SHAVED BALD to complete his disguise as a druid.

Galahad rolls the guardsman's corpse through the hole into the tunnels below and replaces the grate over the opening.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

In another corridor, Galahad passes a group of CITY GUARDSMEN who do not even acknowledge his presence.

Disguised as a druid, Galahad is able to roam the castle with total impunity.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - SAME TIME

Lancelot and Lady Guinevere approach a large oaken door posted by a CITY GUARDSMAN. The Queen carries the WOODEN BOX where Galahad hid his letters.

LADY GUINEVERE

Where is Malagant? I ordered him to hold this post.

The nervous guardsman stammers out an explanation --

NERVOUS GUARDSMAN

Ah, Sir Malagant... my Lady, Your Grace, I mean, he, ah, is within --

LADY GUINEVERE

Inside?

Lady Guinevere steps around the guardsman to open the door --

INT. GUEST QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

-- Lady Guinevere walks inside the guest quarters.

Lynette stands, arms crossed, near the window. She's weeping.

Lucan sits in the corner at the far end of the room, staring miles away. He cradles his arm. His face is bruised, scraped and bloodied from trying to stop Malagant's assault.

Malagant steps out to face the Queen when she enters. He is buckling on his sword-belt.

LADY GUINEVERE
Sir Malagant -- I believe I posted
you outside the guest quarters.

Lancelot is shaken by what he sees, by Malagant's cruelty.

MALAGANT
You wanted them watched, Your
Grace. They were watched.

Malagant strides for the door, stepping around Lady Guinevere. He reaches Lancelot, who stands in his way.

MALAGANT
Piss off, Lancelot. Or might be
I'll use your arse for my scabbard.

Malagant rests his palm on his sword hilt. Lancelot does not budge. So Malagant moves him bodily out of the way.

Lady Guinevere goes to Lynette and sits down beside her on the windowsill. A bruise wells under Lynette's eye and blood runs from her nose.

LADY GUINEVERE
Are you hurt, my Lady Lynette?

Lady Guinevere takes out a handkerchief and dabs the blood.

LADY GUINEVERE
If Malagant has hurt you in any
way, I will have his ugly head.

Lynette says nothing. The Queen shows her the wooden box.

LADY GUINEVERE
I wanted to show you this...

She opens the box, revealing a STACK OF PARCHMENT LETTERS --

LADY GUINEVERE
Letters that you sent your beloved
husband. And letters, I think, that
he wrote to you but never sent.

Lynette takes the letters, her hands shaking --

LADY GUINEVERE
It appears to be one letter for
each week that Galahad has served
the crown. He seems to love you
very much.

LYNETTE
(through tears)
Where is Galahad?

LADY GUINEVERE
The letters were found when I was
forced to have my men search Sir
Galahad's personal quarters.

Lynette awaits the reason --

LADY GUINEVERE
It wounds me deeply to say that we
also found a phial of poison. The
same that was used to murder my
husband, King Arthur Pendragon.
(crocodile tears)
I'm afraid, my Lady, that Sir
Galahad has slain our beloved King.

Lynette LAUGHS aloud at the absurdity of Guinevere's claim.

LYNETTE
You must not know my husband, Lady
Guinevere.

LADY GUINEVERE
(pandering)
I apologize that you have not been
acquainted with the principles of
courtesy, Lady Lynette. Coming from
such common stations as you and the
assassin Galahad have, it is most
understandable. With my husband
gone, I am now the sitting Queen.
Until the time when my son Mordred
comes of age, you may address me as
"Your Grace."

In a blur, Lynette is on her feet, the letters SPILLING OFF
HER LAP -- She winds up and SLAPS Guinevere across the face.

LYNETTE
Fuck you, "Your Grace."

Lancelot grits his teeth, but makes no move for Lynette.

LANCELOT
Mind your courtesies, my Lady.

Lady Guinevere sets her jaw, standing to face Lynette with
her cheek red and stinging:

LADY GUINEVERE
Galahad has committed the highest
treason.

LADY GUINEVERE (CONT'D)
 And if he fails to produce himself
 by first light, your son will be
 hanged in his father's stead.

Lucan's heart begins to race, his mouth drying up --

LYNETTE
 You cannot. You would not.

LADY GUINEVERE
 You cannot, "Your Grace." And I
 certainly can, my gentle Lady. I am
 the Queen of Albion.
 (to Lancelot)
 Come, Lancelot. Let us take our
 guests to the great hall.

LYNETTE
 NO!

Lynette SHRIEKS -- Lancelot takes hold of her half-heartedly
 She squirms as he drags her bodily from the room --

EXT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

Out in the corridor, Lynette writhes in Lancelot's grip --

LADY GUINEVERE
 (to Lancelot)
 Have the Round Table summoned. This
 madness ends today.

Lynette THRASHES madly -- She's BELLOWING bloody murder --

LANCELOT
 Shut up, woman!

Lady Guinevere looks at Lancelot with a wry smile.

LADY GUINEVERE
 Let her scream if she must.

Off the Queen's smile, Lancelot recalls her tale about the
 cougar and her dying cubs. *This was the plan all along.*

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

This cavernous chamber has been host to hundreds of royal
 banquets for a dozen Kings and Queens during its time.

Intricate tapestries cover each wall. The mounted heads of
 beasts hang over a titanic open fireplace.

Suits of armor commemorating fallen warriors and kings line
 the far wall.

A dining table over 200 feet in length sits at the center of the room, 50 high-backed oaken chairs on each side.

Lady Guinevere leads the group into the room, Lancelot with Lynette and the Nervous Guardsman with Lucan. Another group of a half-dozen CITY GUARDSMEN enter behind the main group for added fortification, led by the Sergeant.

LADY GUINEVERE

(to a guardsman)

Fetch the cookstaff. I am sure Lady Lynette and Master Lucan are famished following their travels.

(to Sergeant)

Mind the passage. I am sure Sir Galahad will be eager to join us.

THE SERGEANT tears down a tapestry. Behind it, there is a HIDDEN DOOR barely visible outlined on the wall.

LADY GUINEVERE

Please, sit. Refreshments will be along shortly. And so, too, I hope will Sir Galahad.

Lady Guinevere smiles. She takes a seat at the table's head.

INT. HIDDEN PASSAGE - SAME TIME

Galahad winds his way through a cramped passage hidden in between the corridors of the Castle Camelot.

He knows the path he is on. Aimed, determined, unstoppable.

INT. GREAT HALL - LATER

The COOKSTAFF bring out plates of fowl, fruits, vegetables to place before Lynette, Lucan, Lady Guinevere and Sir Lancelot. As the servants set down the food...

ANGLE ON - The doors suddenly swing open -- REVEALING: Malagant, Gawain, and Caradoc.

LADY GUINEVERE

Sirs. Welcome.

LATER, IN THE GREAT HALL

Lynette sits before untouched food. Lucan picks at his. Malagant tears chunks from a huge turkey leg with his teeth.

Lancelot drinks a cup of wine, leaning against the mantle over THE FIREPLACE --

The guardsmen intently watch the passage door that was hidden behind the tapestry, ready to spring on Galahad --

LANCELOT (O.S.)
Your Grace?

LADY GUINEVERE startles -- HANDS REACH FOR SWORDS -- Chairs GRIND on stone as everyone rises to their feet --

ANGLE ON - Galahad has just emerged from a hidden passage inside the FIREPLACE. He stands behind Lancelot with his scimitar laid across Lancelot's neck.

LUCAN
Father!

Gawain grabs Lynette's jaw, pulling her into him. His squinting eyes peer at Galahad from over her shoulder.

Malagant draws his huge sword, putting it on a diagonal across Lucan's body. The sword is taller than he is.

The Sergeant and his group of guardsmen advance on Galahad --

LADY GUINEVERE
Sir Galahad. You are clearly outmanned. Throw down your sword and give your surrender.

Galahad draws Lancelot's sword from his scabbard with his free hand and THROWS IT AWAY --

GALAHAD
Release them, Your Grace. Your quarrel is with me, not them.

The guardsmen inch toward Galahad's flanks -- He circles away from them, holding Lancelot, protecting his position --

LADY GUINEVERE
I'm afraid the Queen quarrel is with all who oppose her.

Galahad circles away from the fireplace with Lancelot, putting himself in a better position to move for his family --

Lady Guinevere's eyes move to THE FIREPLACE. *His only chance at escape.* She calls to a COOK who is gaping at the scene --

LADY GUINEVERE
You there, cook. Prepare a fire.
This hall has taken a chill.

YOUNG COOK
A fire, Your Grace?

LADY GUINEVERE

Yes, you fool. A fire. Are you a
cook or is that a disguise as well?

All eyes watch the young cook nervously approach the hearth. He stacks logs of chopped wood inside the fireplace. When it is done, he turns to Lady Guinevere --

YOUNG COOK

I need to fetch some flint, Your --

Lancelot, in Galahad's grip, loses his patience and snaps:

LANCELOT

-- Use a bloody torch, you jackass!

The cook takes a burning torch from its sconce and throws it atop the wood pile. The fire takes. In moments, the wood is SPLITTING and CRACKING as the blaze rages.

Galahad's exit passage is now blocked by the flames.

LADY GUINEVERE

Your path to succor is blocked, Sir
Galahad. Perhaps you will now
rethink your desire to confess?

GALAHAD

You are right. I have failed in my
duty, Your Grace.

The Lady Guinevere stifles a smile. *I have him now.*

LADY GUINEVERE

Make your confession, Sir Galahad.

GALAHAD

I chose not to share my knowledge
of your murder of King Arthur with
my brothers of the Round Table. Nor
did I expose your breaking of your
marital oath with Sir Lancelot. And
in those matters, I have failed to
uphold my oath.

Malagant BOOMS LAUGHTER at Lancelot. Gawain's eyes track back and forth between Lancelot and Lady Guinevere.

The Lady Guinevere is purple with rage. She turns to Gawain:

LADY GUINEVERE

Sir Gawain, show Galahad the cost
of defying his Queen.

Galahad tightens his grip around Lancelot --

GALAHAD

NO!

Gawain does not hesitate. He slides the dirk from his baldric and slits Lynette's throat from ear to ear.

LUCAN

Mother!

Lucan writhes, SCREAMING in Malagant's vise-like grip as he watches his mother's life pass from her --

Lynette's mouth makes soundless movements as blood runs in a river down her gown. Soon, the light is gone from her eyes.

Lancelot watches, helpless, as Gawain drops Lynette's body.

LADY GUINEVERE

Do not again underestimate my resolve, Sir Galahad.

Staring down at Lynette's lifeless body, Galahad slackens his grip on Lancelot, just for a moment --

And Lancelot elbows Galahad HARD in the gut -- OOF! --

Lancelot breaks away, diving and rolling for his sword --

GALAHAD IS EXPOSED. The guards descend on him --

The dark, pattern-welded steel of Galahad's scimitar FLASHES, coming up to BEHEAD the first guardsman --

CHAOS.

Galahad has been possessed. He cuts through the guards one at a time, a man fighting against boys --

ANGLE ON - Lucan, still held captive by Malagant, looks for escape -- He peers down at the oiled boots that Malagant wears and sees a SHEATHED DAGGER --

Swiftly, Lucan bends, rips the dagger free and plunges it into Malagant's belly --

Malagant's sword CLATTERS to the ground as he ROARS in pain, clutching the bloody dagger now protruding from his side --

Lucan, freed, runs to join Galahad --

Lady Guinevere watches the Great Hall devolve into chaos.

LADY GUINEVERE

Stop them! Kill them both!

Caradoc, Gawain and Lancelot draw steel --

Lucan, stoops mid-stride to pick up a sword from a fallen guardsman -- And in the same motion, Lucan CUTS DOWN one of Galahad's guardsman opponents from behind --

Galahad beats back the final guardsman -- He shoves him away to go for the killing strike, but Lucan steps between them, DRIVES his sword into the guard's gut and TWISTS --

The guardsman gurgles blood at his mouth before collapsing.

Galahad watches in surprise as his son coolly pulls the sword blade out of the man he just killed.

Lancelot and Gawain close on them -- Galahad grabs Lucan --

GALAHAD
With me.

LUCAN
I want Gawain!

Lucan steps toward Gawain --

GALAHAD
Now, damn it, Lucan!

Galahad takes Lucan's arm, leading him to the dining table --

Galahad vaults himself on top, dragging Lucan behind him --

ANGLE ON - Malagant, hand clutched at his bleeding side, forces himself back to his feet with the aid of his sword --

Atop the table, Lucan slips on a serving platter, CRASHING to the table -- When Lucan looks to his side, he sees MALAGANT nearly on top of him, sword raised like a chopping axe --

WHAM! Malagant's greatsword BITES deep into the dinning table, missing Lucan -- Galahad has dragged him to safety --

Together, Galahad and Lucan race for the wall lined in the standing suits of armor --

Behind, Galahad's pursuers scramble to catch him --

Galahad pushes a statue of an ARMORED KNIGHT -- It SLIDES away, revealing a small OPENING -- Another escape route!

GALAHAD
(to Lucan)
Inside. Quickly.

INSIDE THE HATCH

Lucan CRASHES to the ground, his leg SNAPPING when he hits the ground -- He HOWLS in pain, clutching his broken leg --

Galahad lowers himself inside after Lucan. He gets distracted at the sight of Lucan SCREAMING, holding his leg --

GALAHAD
What's wrong? On your feet!

LUCAN
I think my leg is broken!

ANGLE ON - A shadow is cast into the hatch -- Hands stop the sliding door in place as THE SERGEANT reaches down inside --

LUCAN (O.S.)
Father!

The Sergeant's chainmailed hand swipes at Galahad --

But Galahad rolls aside, picks up Lucan's sword and drives it upward through The Sergeant's chest -- His body sags into the hole and plugs the opening --

GALAHAD
Come on.

Galahad grabs Lucan's shirt, dragging him deeper into the passage as the Sergeant's body is pulled from the opening --

ANGLE ON - Malagant's greatsword spears through the hole, striking the stone below -- A SPARK lights the darkness --

He will come for them next.

Galahad continues to drag Lucan away. The boy CRIES OUT:

LUCAN
I can't!

Galahad looks right into Lucan's eyes, panicked in his calm.
If you do not follow me, we are both dead.

GALAHAD
You must put the pain aside, Lucan.

I will do my best. Lucan pushes himself up onto the good leg and hobbles after his father into the darkness --

ABOVE, IN THE GREAT HALL

Malagant hauls the Sergeant's body out of the hole and tosses it unceremoniously aside. A HAND falls to his shoulder --

LANCELOT
You're too bloody big, Malagant.
Let me.

Malagant grabs Lancelot at the collar, twisting him around --

ANGLE ON - Blood weeps from Malagant's knife wound --

MALAGANT
I'm gonna cleave that little shit
in two!

Malagant shoves Lancelot away and tries to climb into the opening -- But he really is too big --

INT. HIDDEN PASSAGES - SAME TIME

Galahad drags Lucan through winding tunnels too squat for them to run upright -- A left, a right, another left, Galahad makes changes in direction to shake those who pursue them --

Lucan SOBS in agony behind Galahad as their enemies' SHOUTS ECHO through the tunnels behind them --

GALAHAD
Faster!

Lucan finally stops, holds fast.

LUCAN
I can't!

Galahad moves Lucan into a position where some torchlight is filtering into the passage from the outside corridors --

LUCAN'S LEG is badly broken. It is purple and pulsing blood from where the bone has punctured the skin.

GALAHAD
All right. Easy now.

Galahad lifts Lucan and carries him deeper into the tunnels.

LATER, IN ANOTHER PASSAGE

Moonlight seeps into a drainage canal from above. Laid in a stone niche, Lucan dozes in a tortured sleep while his father watches him from his seat on the floor below.

There, streams of tears glisten on Galahad's cheeks in pale light as he mourns Lynette's loss in silence.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GATES OF CAMELOT - NIGHT

TWO MOUNTED RIDERS race across the dark, expansive sea of plains outside Camelot. They are approaching the city gates.

AT THE POSTERN GATE

THE GATEHOUSE GUARD holds a torch up to the portcullis.

THE OUTRIDERS are ragged, dirty. Like they have fled a war.

GATEHOUSE GUARD
Identify yourselves!

OUTRIDER
Outriders for Her Grace. We return
with news of Lyonesse.

INT. LADY GUINEVERE'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Lancelot enters the Queen's private chambers at the lead of the two Outriders that recently arrived at the gate.

Lady Guinevere paces restlessly amongst doting SERVANTS.

LANCELOT
Guinevere...

Lancelot forgets his courtesy before both the servants and soldiers. He is shaken. Nearly speechless.

Lady Guinevere, knowing this is terrible news, SHRIEKS:

LADY GUINEVERE
Leave us. Get out! NOW!

The servants flee her chambers.

LADY GUINEVERE
What is it?

LANCELOT
My Lady -- Your Grace -- Lyonesse
has... fallen.

Lady Guinevere's breath catches in her throat. *My home.* She tries to remain composed.

LADY GUINEVERE
You dare come here to jest with me
about my father's lands?

One of the Outriders steps forward, keeping his eyes low.

OUTRIDER
'Tis no jest, Your Grace.
Palamedes' Saracens have sacked the
city, taken it. They've scrambled
scouts North, killing any outriders
that might have carried the news.

Lady Guinevere lips quiver. Her eyes glisten with moisture.

LADY GUINEVERE
How long ago?

OUTRIDER
We were forced to take a long path
through the mountains to avoid --

LADY GUINEVERE
-- How long?

LANCELOT
A month, Your Grace.

OUTRIDER
The, ah -- Palamedes' army is
massing at Lyonesse. Preparing for
invasion, Your Grace.

LADY GUINEVERE
My father? Lord Bedivere?

The Outrider shakes his head. *I do not know.*

LADY GUINEVERE
(to Lancelot)
Find Galahad. Kill him. Every
soldier of every house of Albion
shall be marching South within a
fortnight to meet Palamedes.

LANCELOT
(gently)
Why not let him go, Your Grace? He
is but one man --

LADY GUINEVERE
-- Allow our King's murderer to
escape? Have you gone mad, Sir
Lancelot?

Lancelot stares back at her. *Have I gone mad?*

LADY GUINEVERE
No, perhaps you have not gone mad.
Perhaps my First Knight has simply
gone as soft as Arthur. I do not
know which disgusts me more.

Insulted, Lancelot defers to her with false courtesy:

LANCELOT
Then what might Your Grace suggest?

LADY GUINEVERE
Set fires. Use smoke, oil, ash to
drive him out.

LADY GUINEVERE (CONT'D)
 Send my armies into the walls. Take
 this godforsaken Saracen maze apart
 brick-by-godless-brick if you must.
 But find him.

LANCELOT
 Fires? Guinevere, you cannot --

LADY GUINEVERE
 -- I will. I shall command a new
 castle rebuilt atop Galahad's
 shallow grave. One built by the
 children of the goddess, not the
 savages of the desert. And then,
 Palamedes' Empire will burn with a
 fury even he could not conjure.

Lancelot stares back at Guinevere. *She has gone totally mad.*

EXT. THE CITY OF CAMELOT - NIGHT

Night has fallen over Camelot.

AT THE CASTLE - Smoke rises. Orange flames lick the night air
 as one of the castle spires burns, CONSUMED IN FLAME --

INT. HIDDEN PASSAGE - NIGHT

Led by a single torch, Galahad inches forward in a half-crouch inside a particularly small tunnel.

Behind him, Lucan shuffles backward on his rear-end, his back to Galahad. Lucan is still in a great amount of pain.

LUCAN
 How much further?

GALAHAD
 I believe we are getting close.

Just then, Lucan sees something MOVE in the inky darkness that hangs behind them. A quick motion, then nothing.

LUCAN
 Father?

GALAHAD
 We are almost there, Lucan.

LUCAN
 Can I hold the torch?

GALAHAD
 I need to see where we are going.

SOMETHING moves again -- just for a moment -- in the dark.

LUCAN
Father, please give me the torch.

GALAHAD
Why -- ?

LUCAN
Give me the torch!

Galahad turns around to hand the torch to Lucan -- This LIGHTS the tunnel behind them, REVEALING --

A MOUNTAIN LION not four feet away from Lucan -- The beast recoils at the light shone in its eyes, SNARLING --

GALAHAD
Use the torch!

Galahad drops the torch into Lucan's lap --

The lion lunges for Lucan, but eats a snout-full of torch. A shower of orange sparks falls from its singed whiskers --

The cougar recoils again, reloading for another strike --

This time, the lion is met by the point of Galahad's sword -- It sags with a last RUSH of breath, dead in the passage.

Both both stare at it. *Where the hell did that come from?*

INT. GALAHAD'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

A panel in the wall of Galahad's prior quarters in the Round Table's barracks slides away.

Galahad appears first, sword at ready. When he signals behind him that it is safe, Lucan slides out on his rear.

LUCAN
They won't look for us here?

Galahad slides the stone panel closed.

GALAHAD
My quarters are no more dangerous now than the siege tunnels. At least here there is a bed for you to rest in before we set out again.

Galahad helps Lucan into the bed.

Father and son look at one another in a long silence before Lucan speaks:

LUCAN
I couldn't save her...

GALAHAD
Your mother's passing is on the
souls of the wicked people who
orchestrated this, not yours.

LUCAN
You said that honor is what makes a
knight different than a warrior.
But it isn't true. These knights
are worse than any soldiers.

Galahad points at Lucan's heart.

GALAHAD
You must hold the belief in the
order of chivalry stronger now than
you ever have. These men of the
Round Table are not knights. They
are the most abominable form of
evil: that which abuses power to
exploit the trust of the innocent.

Lucan chews on this a moment. Then, tears come:

LUCAN
Malagant... he... came to us,
mother and I, where we were held...

Galahad's face turns to stone as he begins to understand.

INT. MALAGANT'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

A chamber swallowed in darkness. Anemic moonlight offers only hints of what may lie within. Time does not move until --

THE DOOR SLAMS open, oak shivering against the castle wall.

A YOUNG GIRL is first to enter, staggering as if she was thrown inside. She GIGGLES as she regains her footing --

YOUNG GIRL
Oh, my Lord's chivalry is too kind.

Malagant enters behind her, his hugeness towering inside the small door frame. He is not amused by the girl's humor.

MALAGANT
Get on your back and spread your
legs. I didn't pay to have you
squawk at me.

Malagant shuts the door behind him, barring it closed.

The whore's mouth snaps shut as she comes to realize where she is and who she is with. She is frozen in place.

MALAGANT

No clever quip, wench? Take it off
before I bloody cut it off.

Malagant strips off his own shirt. When he lights a sconce --

It exposes the extent of his full-body tattooing. The black skeleton is no less intricate under his shirt. It extends from his torso up to his throat. There is a fresh suture at his ribs where his knife wound was recently stitched up.

Malgant's quarters are squalid. A feather mattress sits on a thin bed of hay. The far wall is bare, but for the aged BLOODSTAINS that have painted it nearly a solid crimson.

The whore's breath catches in her throat at its sight.

ANGLE ON - Galahad stands in the corner, his sheathed longsword perched against his shoulder. Malagant's enormous greatsword is sheathed, leaned up in the corner behind him.

The whore SHRIEKS. Malagant RIPS his dirk from his belt.

GALAHAD

Don't bother.

Galahad grabs Malagant's sheathed sword and throws it to him.

Malagant catches the scabbard, sheathes his dirk, and draws the enormous greatsword --

Galahad and Malagant come together, sword on sword --

-- CRASH - CLATTER - CLANG -- Steel rings on steel as the two battle in close quarters. Malagant has a longer range and is much stronger, but Galahad is quicker and more athletic.

Galahad weaves well inside Malagant's range, using the confined room to his advantage -- He comes about behind Malagant and slashes the back of his thigh open --

Malagant ROARS, spinning and punching Galahad in the face, sending him CRASHING into the corner where he spills the chamber pot with another CLATTER --

The whore SCREAMS, running for the door -- Fumbles with the bar -- And then she's gone, leaving the door WIDE OPEN --

Malagant picks Galahad up and THROWS HIM across the room -- Galahad and sword both fly astray --

ANGLE ON - Caradoc, the Green Knight, appears in the doorway. He unsheathes his sword and puts the tip to the ground.

Malagant turns back to Galahad and boots him in the gut --
 Galahad GASPS for air, rolling away --

Malagant raises his two-handed sword -- SLASHES! -- A
 terrible SCREECH as steel strikes stone with a BRIGHT SPARK --

Malagant the Mad loses all remaining sanity --

He CHOPS again and again, wildly HACKING at Galahad as he
 crawls, dives, and dodges his way back to his own sword --

Finally Galahad gets a handle on his sword -- He rolls --
 Malagant's sword arcs like a falling battle-axe --

Galahad thrusts up his sword, spearing Malagant in the gut --

Galahad releases his sword, rolls aside -- Malagant CRASHES
 forward into the wall, driving Galahad's sword deeper into
his gut. Malagant GAGS, spattering blood from his mouth --

ANGLE ON - Caradoc makes no move for Galahad.

Suddenly, Malagant pushes himself away from the wall.

He's still alive. He faces Galahad, blood running in a river
 over his teeth and down his tattooed throat and torso.

MALAGANT
 (mouth full of blood)
 I'm gonna take a piss on your
 bloody corpse, Galahad.

Malagant slowly draws Galahad's sword out of his own gut --

He turns the blade, slick with blood, and SWINGS at Galahad --

But Malagant falls forward -- Galahad dives out of the way --

Malagant pushes himself up on his hands and knees, blood
 leaking from his mouth, back and belly --

Coming to his feet, Galahad picks up Malagant's greatsword.
 He circles to stand over Malagant's neck. Raises the sword --

-- And beheads Malagant in a single stroke.

ANGLE ON - Caradoc finally speaks in his thick brogue:

CARADOC
 Well fought, my Lord.

Galahad turns, the heavy greatsword ready for Caradoc --

CARADOC
 (holding up his hand)
 I come to you as ally, not as foe.

GALAHAD

(spitting rage)

Now? After I have been hunted, my family taken from their home and my wife raped and murdered before her son's eyes! Tell me why I should not cut you down, as well, "SIR!"

CARADOC

I beg your forgiveness, Galahad. I was a man blind to Guinevere's treachery, but I have been given sight. Sight from the Green Mother in the fires of the sacrificed oak and sight from the wickedness of the men we have so foolishly called our brothers.

Spitting, Galahad THROWS DOWN Malagant's greatsword.

Caradoc steps inside the room, sheathing his sword. He walks to Galahad and kneels.

CARADOC

You must believe that I, like you, am a man of loyalty. Loyalty to Arthur, to Camelot, to the ways of the Mother goddess and to the oath we have sworn to uphold as knights of the Round Table.

Galahad looks down at Malagant's body, sadness in his voice:

GALAHAD

The Round Table does not exist. The men thought to be the finest knights in the realm are no more than a pack of loyal wolves looking for scraps from their master.

CARADOC

(from his knees)

I pledge myself again to the rightful King of Albion. To the oath we both spoke. To the scar we both wear. Guinevere and her vile knights must be stopped.

Galahad bends -- Caradoc's eyes go wide -- *Is he going to kill me?* -- And Galahad picks up his blood-drenched sword.

INT. CARADOC'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Galahad carries Lucan into Caradoc's personal quarters.
Caradoc follows them inside and bars the door.

The room is a shrine to the Green Mother. Religious artifacts are the only decor in the otherwise barren quarters.

CARADOC

I must go to my post, but you will be safe here through the night.

Galahad gently lays Lucan in the bed. The boy is sunken and pale, sick with fever from his broken leg.

CARADOC

Tomorrow, I am escorting a transport of prisoner labor from Camelot. It seems my Lords are due for some hard masonwork far beyond the city walls.

Caradoc offers a comforting smile, but it turns to a frown as he watches Galahad examine Lucan's nasty leg wound.

CARADOC

How does the boy fare?

GALAHAD

The wound has corrupted. He will not make it as far as Avalon without intervention. We must leave him with Brother Mer'Lin at the monastery before we set out.

CARADOC

The Saracen?

GALAHAD

The only man left within this city that I trust.

Caradoc bows. *As you will.*

CARADOC

I will return before first light.
May the Mother watch over you.

Caradoc leaves them.

INT. KING'S SOLAR - NIGHT

Caradoc reports to the Lady Guinevere for his evening duty.

Gawain is already with her, looming like grim death. She rises to meet Caradoc, her skirts flowing beneath her.

LADY GUINEVERE

Where is Malagant? He was to return here with Mordred an hour ago.

Caradoc bows an apology.

CARADOC
I have not seen him, Your Grace.

LADY GUINEVERE
Probably out whoring, no matter
that half his order is dead with
one of them loose in the castle and
seeking to murder his Queen. I
should have his head!

LANCELOT (O.S.)
Someone already has.

Lancelot emerges at the entrance of the solar, a half dozen
CITY GUARDSMEN with him.

LADY GUINEVERE
What?

LANCELOT
I sent the city guard to find him.
They did. In two pieces.

LADY GUINEVERE
(through grit teeth)
Galahad.
(even)
And what has your search for the
traitor knight yielded, Sir
Lancelot?

Matter-of-factly, Lancelot doles out the bad news:

LANCELOT
The fires Your Grace ordered set
tore through most of the castle
library before they were smothered.
One of the cougars we released into
the tunnels from the menagerie was
found dead in a siege passage.
Another got loose and attacked the
kitchen workers, killing three of
Your Grace's staff before it was
put down. The third is still
unaccounted for. Scores of vipers,
also released into the tunnels,
have been finding their way into
castle chambers. Four have been
attacked by the serpents so far and
the warden is unsure how many have
been trapped, killed or lost.

LADY GUINEVERE
But Galahad remains at large.

LANCELOT
(caustic)

Aye, Your Grace. A most worthy
adversary. Perhaps you might try
larger, more ferocious beasts?

LADY GUINEVERE

Neither Queen nor King of Albion
has ever hanged their First Knight.
Mock me again, Lancelot, and I
promise to make history.

Lancelot bows. *As you wish.*

LADY GUINEVERE

Go fetch Mordred and bring him
here. He is not safe about on his
own without a knight of The Six.

CARADOC

(alarmed)

Your Grace, I, ah, was to escort
the young Prince to the stonehenge
for his evening prayer.

LADY GUINEVERE

That will wait. You and Gawain are
here with me.

(to Lancelot)

Sir Lancelot, kindly find my son if
that search is not beyond your
capability.

Lancelot withdraws from the chamber.

INT. CARADOC'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Lucan shivers and sweats, delirious with fever.

Galahad bends over him. The boy's lips are chapped and dry. Galahad picks up a wooden bowl. In the bottom is a wet cloth, but the bowl itself has been emptied of water.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

Galahad buckles on his sword belt as he exits Caradoc's quarters. He carries the wooden bowl close to his body, hyper-vigilant of his surroundings.

He listens for every sound, watches for every sight.

ANGLE ON - Recessed in a corridor wall is a brass tap. When Galahad opens the tap, water flows out. He fills the bowl, looking from side to side for whomever may approach.

Galahad heads back to Caradoc's quarters with the full water bowl. But when he reaches the door, IT IS ALREADY OPEN --

INT. CARADOC'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Galahad enters Caradoc's quarters, one hand holding the bowl of water, the other already on the pommel of his sword.

MORDRED is standing at Lucan's bedside. Without turning:

MORDRED

Caradoc was to meet me for an evening prayer to the Green Mother, but he never came.

(turns around)

Do you know what I pray for? For a return to the time I suddenly have trouble remembering. When my father was King and we would hunt. When you were First Knight and I was your squire and you would teach me arms in the fields. When The Six stood strong and the throne of Camelot was unshakable.

Mordred looks back at Lucan's body.

MORDRED

Your son has much of you in him.

GALAHAD

Lucan has made me very proud.

MORDRED

I used to believe that my father was the most honorable, strongest man in the realm. I wanted to be him. But as I grew older, I came to see him for what he truly was. A coward. Now, I wish to be like neither my father or my mother.

(turning back to Galahad)

Do you mean to kill her?

GALAHAD

I mean to uphold the oath I have sworn.

MORDRED

And that means my mother's death.

GALAHAD

It means that you will be crowned King and the Lady Guinevere will be forced to answer for her crimes.

Mordred nods. *As I thought.* He walks past Galahad on his way out of Caradoc's quarters. When he has passed:

GALAHAD
What will you do?

MORDRED
I will try to be the King you have taught me to be.

Galahad turns around to see Mordred closing the door --

MORDRED
Keep the door barred. The search for you is still afoot.

Mordred seals the door shut.

INT. KING'S SOLAR - NIGHT

Lady Guinevere sleeps soundly amongst the pillows and furs of the enormous royal bed.

Lancelot is wide awake. He sits before Guinevere's vanity mirror, looking at the REFLECTION of his bare torso. The skin on his body is flawless, unmarked by battle.

Lancelot stares at the ROUND TABLE BRAND on his chest, the only imperfection on him.

Standing up, Lancelot lifts a torch from the sconce sitting over the vanity mirror. He takes one last look at his brand --

Before driving the burning torch into his own chest -- The fire HISSES on Lancelot's skin as he gnaws on his lip, desperately trying to keep the scream from coming out.

When removes the torch, Lancelot sees the blistered, translucent skin on his heaving chest. The damage is all that remains where the mark of his Round Table oath once lay.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Two druids wheel a cart meant to transport the dead.

Caradoc meets them carrying a body wrapped in a blanket. The druids bow their heads and step away, pitying the dead.

Carefully, Caradoc places Lucan into the cart.

CARADOC
The lad was caught stealing bread.
Broke his leg when he tried to
escape the City Guard.

CARADOC (CONT'D)

But her Grace the Queen has taken
pity on the little wretch and asked
that he receive the personal care
of Brother Mer'Lin.

The druids bow acknowledgement.

CARADOC

(deliberate)

See to her wishes quietly and
secretly. Am I understood?

The druids nod. They lift the cart and wend through the castle corridors on their way out...

INT. DRUID'S MONASTERY - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Brother Mer'Lin attends to a number of sick and injured PATIENTS abed in the hospital. There is a NOISE behind him --

TWO DRUIDS wheel the cart holding Lucan inside the monastery. They pass Mer'Lin and lift Lucan into one of the open beds.

The druids return to Mer'Lin, coaxing him to see to Lucan --

BROTHER MER'LIN

Brothers, I am with a patient --

They drag Mer'Lin over to Lucan. One pulls away the blanket, exposing the boy's INFECTED, BROKEN LEG --

BROTHER MER'LIN

Mother preserve -- how long has this gone untreated? Bring water, herbs, cotton wraps, and a plaster trench. Quickly.

As the druids go to work on Mer'Lin's commands, he pulls the blanket off the rest of the boy.

ANGLE ON - A rolled piece of parchment is stuffed in Lucan's hand and clutched to his chest.

Mer'Lin removes the parchment from Lucan's grip. He unrolls it and reads the message. Suddenly alarmed, he shouts:

BROTHER MER'LIN

Make haste, Brothers!

Brother Mer'Lin hurries to a nearby worktable. He picks up a LONG SYRINGE with a leather bolus attached to the blunt end.

He drives the needle into Lucan's infected leg and squeezes the bolus, injecting him with some antibacterial solution.

INT. MAIN CASTLE GATE - FIRST LIGHT

The whispers of dawn set the horizon outside Camelot afire.

A large wheelhouse is backed up inside the main castle gate. The prisoner transport sits twenty men inside and is drawn by six horses tethered in two lines of three each.

A CHAIN GANG is marched out of the belly of the castle. Prisoners dressed in rough woolen robes, chained to one another at the wrists and ankles.

ANGLE ON - Caradoc patrols about on foot, sword drawn.

EXT. THE CITY OF CAMELOT - CONTINUOUS

The wheelhouse trundles down the stone bridge connecting the Castle Camelot to the city. Caradoc rides escort beside it.

THE WEST POSTERN GATE sits a mile in the distance.

INT. DRUID'S MONASTERY - HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Brother Mer'Lin is bent over Lucan's broken leg, now wrapped in thick linen strips that have hardened with plaster. He puts his nose near the cast's opening and sniffs. His nose wrinkles at the smell, but he is content with the progress.

When he looks up, he finds the eyes of a conscious Lucan.

BROTHER MER'LIN
Hello. I am Brother Mer'Lin.

LUCAN
My leg hurts.

BROTHER MER'LIN
As it should. But you are fortunate to have youth and the miracle of druidic medicine marching at your side. How do you feel otherwise?

LUCAN
Tired. Thirsty.

BROTHER MER'LIN
Two things I can help remedy. But the fever is on the retreat and the bone is on the mend, so we should both be relieved.

Mer'Lin crushes herbs into powder with a mortar and pestle, then adds water to the mortar and stirs it.

LUCAN
Where is my father?

BROTHER MER'LIN
(giving Lucan the mortar)
Drink this. Slowly.

BROTHER MER'LIN
Once you are well enough, my order
will quietly spirit you beyond the
city walls to the seat of Avalon
where you will meet your father.

LUCAN
My father has gone back to Avalon?

BROTHER MER'LIN
You must try to rest, Lucan.

Mer'Lin leaves Lucan to rest. He quickly fades into sleep...

EXT. THE CITY OF CAMELOT - NEAR POSTERN GATE - SAME TIME

The horse-drawn prisoner transport THUNDERS noisily as it rolls down the cobblestone road leading to the postern gate.

THE POSTERN GATE is 100 yards away. The gate is an access point set into the hundred-foot high city walls and rises another fifteen feet beyond the surrounding structure. LOOKOUTS and ARCHERS roam the parapet atop the gate.

It is double-gated, an iron portcullis sealing either end. GUARDS patrol both outside and inside the gatehouse.

Caradoc's mount gallops ahead to the postern gate.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - SAME TIME

Dusty sunlight seeps between the cracks of the confined wheelhouse. Two rows of ten prisoners sit facing one another, feet and hands chained to iron hooks sunk into the floor.

One prisoner slips the chains off his hands and then reaches down and easily removes the manacles from his feet.

OLD PRISONER
The bloody hell is this?

FAT PRISONER
Let me out, m'Lord! The wench were
a liar! I'm innocent!

Other PLEAS for help come as Galahad prepares to escape --

EXT. POSTERN GATE - SAME TIME

The wheelhouse comes to a halt outside the gate.

A GATEHOUSE GUARD steps out to meet Caradoc, who reels his mount. The horse SNORTS. The gatehouse guard bows when he sees that Caradoc is a knight of the Round Table.

GATEHOUSE GUARD
Hail, m'Lord.

CARADOC
I escort a labor transport bound
for the quarries at Stonegate.

GATEHOUSE GUARD
Aye, m'Lord.
(shouts to gate operators)
Open 'em up!

The inner portcullis GRINDS and CLICK-CLACKS as the operators crank the mechanism to raise the heavy iron gate --

THE PORTCULLIS slowly ascends until it LOCKS open.

The horses tow the wheelhouse inside the postern gate, but the second portcullis remains closed.

Caradoc watches the prisoner transport move through.

CARADOC
Open the second gate.

GATEHOUSE GUARD
After the first is closed, m'Lord.
Apologies, Queen's word. Don't want
no one gettin' out the city walls.

The wheelhouse is fully inside the postern gate.

GATEHOUSE GUARD
Go ahead inside, m'Lord.

Reluctant, Caradoc urges his mount inside the postern gate beside the wheelhouse -- As soon as he is inside --

THE CRANKS ARE LOOSED -- The first portcullis comes CRASHING DOWN where it SPEARS into the dirt --

Caradoc REARS his horse, turning to face the closed gate --

ANGLE ON - Lady Guinevere appears a horse on the city side of the gate. With her rides Mordred and a BATTALION OF SOLDIERS.

LADY GUINEVERE

Your betrayal wounds me worst of all, Caradoc. I did not think a man devoted to the Goddess would so easily surrender his virtues to enter league with a traitor.

Caradoc does not respond. He turns his mount, riding for the still-closed front portcullis where --

LANCELOT waits on horseback at the head of another BATALLION OF SOLDIERS outside Camelot's city walls.

Caradoc sees what surrounds him. Gates on either side. Lancelot and Guinevere. *I am trapped within these walls.*

ANGLE ON - The rear doors of the wheelhouse SLAM open. Galahad steps out, shedding his prisoner's garb.

A melancholy in his voice, Lancelot recites a battle poem:

LANCELOT

"I love to see amid the meadows the field knights and horses in battle array; it delights me when the scouts scatter people and herds in their path. Maces, swords, helms of different colors, shields that will be riven and shattered --

Lancelot's horse stirs beneath him, sensing what is to come.

LANCELOT (CONT'D)

-- In seeing men great and small go down on the grass beyond the castle moat. And in seeing at last the dead, the pennoned stumps of lances still in their sides."

Lady Guinevere looks down at Galahad from her horse.

LADY GUINEVERE

This is the second time you have tried to turn my son against me, Galahad. There will not be a third.

Galahad looks from Lady Guinevere over to Mordred, his emotions unreadable. Mordred's eyes shy away from Galahad's.

MORDRED

(meekly)

She is my mother.

LADY GUINEVERE

Guardsmen, do what you must.

Inside the sealed postern gate, guards draw steel and descend to the ground level.

Caradoc reaches into his saddle scabbard and throws Galahad a sword. He climbs off his mount and draws his own sword.

THE ENTRY DOOR inside the gatehouse swings open. Six armed guardsmen appear, unsure of the orders they've received.

GALAHAD

(to the gatehouse guards)

Soldiers of Camelot, I speak to you not as a knight of the Round Table, but as one of you. Camelot is a city that has forgotten itself. What once was a place of legendary kings and chivalrous knights has been poisoned by corruption and avarice.

ANGLE ON - Mordred watches intently as Galahad speaks --

GALAHAD (CONT'D)

Stand with me now, here, and we can put an end to this treachery and restore the light to Camelot.

The guardsmen eye one another, none making any move.

LADY GUINEVERE

Guards, do as your Queen has ordered and you will be rewarded in gold, land and titles beyond dream. Defy me and your heads will be sent home to those you hold most dear.

One dour, hard-cut guardsmen moves to the front of the group, brandishing his sword.

BRUTAL GUARDSMAN

There's only two of 'em.

(spits)

Let's cut 'er Grace out 'er prize, boys.

The brutal guardsman moves on Caradoc -- STEEL RINGS ON STEEL and chaos erupts within the postern gate --

Galahad goes in to defend him -- CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

Caradoc beats aside the brutal guardsman's blade and lunges forward, putting his sword through the guardsman's chest --

He twists and pulls out the blood-drenched steel --

The prisoners inside the wheelhouse erupt in CHAIN-RATTLING HECKLES, CHEERS and PLEAS for release as the battle rages --

Galahad parries another guardsman's high cut -- He continues the motion, striking low and hamstringing him -- The guard falls on the useless leg and Galahad runs him through --

LANCELOT watches as another guardsman falls. Galahad and Caradoc are winning. Lancelot paces on horseback like a caged tiger. Fed up, he calls up to the gate operator:

LANCELOT
Open the front gate.

GATE OPERATOR
(*I can't*)
Queen's command, m'Lord.

LANCELOT
I am aware of the Queen's command.
Her First Knight is giving you a
new one. Open the gate.

LADY GUINEVERE calls to him from the other side of the gate:

LADY GUINEVERE
(to Lancelot)
Do not open that gate.

LANCELOT
(to the gate operator)
Open the bloody gate.

GATE OPERATOR
M'Lord, the Queen --

LANCELOT
-- Whose wrath do you fear most?

Lancelot brings his sword across his body in threat.

BETWEEN THE GATES, Galahad and Caradoc face the last guard. Seeing what he is up against, he throws down his sword.

WEAK GUARDSMAN
I yield -- please don't kill me.

LANCELOT bellows up to the gate operator:

LANCELOT
Open the fucking gate!

Caradoc and Galahad turn to face the front gate where Lancelot awaits them, their chests heaving from the effort and their swords painted with the blood of their victory.

Moments pass and nothing happens. Then --

CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK -- The front gate begins to rise --

Lancelot hops down off his horse and draws steel.

As do the horse-mounted soldiers behind him.

ANGLE ON - Lady Guinevere is not pleased.

LADY GUINEVERE
(to her guards)
Get in there!

The iron portcullis is just two feet off the ground --

LANCELOT
You are a platter of shit served at
my glorious feast, Galahad.

Caradoc goes to the rear doors of the prisoner transport,
which is still ALIVE WITH THE PLEAS of the prisoners. He
looks down at the CHAIN tethering them all to the wheelhouse.

Caradoc picks up a BATTLE AXE from one of the dead guards --

GALAHAD
Caradoc, do not --

Caradoc swings the axe -- CHUNK! -- It splits the chain --

THE PRISONERS inside RIOT, flooding out of the wheelhouse --

Lady Guinevere's guards rush inside through the postern
gate's INNER DOOR in time to meet the fleeing prisoners --

And the prisoners attack everyone in sight -- Galahad,
Caradoc, the Camelot guardsmen -- It's utter chaos --

ANGLE ON - Lancelot ducks beneath the rising portcullis,
entering the fray --

He cuts through the mad prisoners that run to meet him, eyes
narrow and focused on Galahad --

ANGLE ON - Galahad turns to face a guardsman, but a prisoner
throws his manacled hands over Galahad's head, CHOKING him --

Galahad KICKS the advancing guardsman before he can attack --
The guardsman comes again and Galahad spins, using the
prisoner on his back as a shield to absorb the sword strike --

ANGLE ON - The portcullis has fully risen --

And now the PRISONERS run out from the gate, CLASHING with
the soldiers who enter from the outside --

ABOVE, IN THE GATEHOUSE

The gate operators look below to see the prisoners fleeing --

GATE OPERATOR

The prisoners are escaping!

GATEHOUSE GUARD

Close the bloody portcullis!

BELOW, BETWEEN THE GATES

WHIRRURRR! -- The portcullis CRASHES DOWN, heavy black iron
GORING both soldiers and prisoners caught in between --

All survivors are now trapped between the two sealed gates.

Caradoc dodges the coming guards' attacks, parries a strike --
 He spins, slashing open two throats in one stroke --

Lancelot closes on Caradoc when -- THE OLD PRISONER comes
 hissing at him, chained hands raised and lunging for
 Lancelot's throat -- Lancelot steps back, sword FLASHING --

He severs the man's chained hands at the wrists -- Lancelot
 side steps the old man's BLOODY STUMPS and keeps moving --

Caradoc steps forward to meet Lancelot -- Keeping the sword
 close, he makes a quick slash for Lancelot's throat --

But Lancelot parries, BLADE ON BLADE -- And, in the same
 motion, drawing his sword back towards himself --

-- Opening the side of Caradoc's throat. Blood SPRAYS all
 over Lancelot from the arterial laceration.

Caradoc staggers a bit in shock, then collapses and bleeds
 out at Lancelot's feet. In a single stroke, Caradoc is dead.

ANGLE ON - Galahad is drenched in blood as he continues to
 SAW THROUGH guards and prisoners alike -- Opening throats,
 hamstringing legs -- Spinning, ducking, slashing, stabbing --

Lancelot calmly wipes off his bloodied face, body and blade
 on the surcoat of one of the soldiers beside him.

Lancelot and all the surviving soldiers surround Galahad.

ANGLE ON - Lady Guinevere rides right up to the closed gate.

LANCELOT

You're a dead man, Galahad. Whether
 it is here or on the headsman's
 stone is your choice.

Galahad, hopelessly surrounded, throws down his sword.

LADY GUINEVERE
Kill him, Lancelot.

MORDRED (O.S.)
(shouting over the Queen)
DO NOT!

ANGLE ON - Mordred rides closer to the gate.

MORDRED
A Knight of the Round Table is due
better than summary execution.

LADY GUINEVERE
Your Queen has given an order, Sir
Lancelot. Kill him.

Galahad turns to face Lancelot, unarmed.

Lady Guinevere grips the portcullis bars. She SHRIEKS:

LADY GUINEVERE
Kill him! NOW!

Lancelot parts the soldiers, sword ready for Galahad... And
punches him in the temple with his sword hilt --

Galahad's world goes BLACK.

INT. DRUID'S MONASTERY - HOSPITAL - DAY

FROM THE DARKNESS -- Lucan blinks awake to see BROTHER
MER'LIN rushing into the hospital room, alarmed --

BROTHER MER'LIN
Rise, boy! Awake!

LUCAN
What is wrong?

There is SHOUTING from upstairs, COMMOTION, CHAOS --

BROTHER MER'LIN
I thought we had more time.

Mer'Lin stops at a worktable. He grabs a loaf of extremely
MOULDY BREAD and rolls it into a cloth.

Mer'Lin stuffs the wrapped loaf into Lucan's arms.

BROTHER MER'LIN
One slice, morning and night until
it is gone.

Confused, Lucan opens the napkin to see the mouldy bread --

LUCAN

This is rank with mould!

BROTHER MER'LIN

(close; quiet; kind)

One slice, morning and night and
perhaps those dreams of knighthood
will not be so out of reach.

ANGLE ON - Sir Gawain emerges in the hospital room at the head of a number of the CITY MILITIA.

Mer'Lin makes himself as big as possible to shield Lucan --

GAWAIN

The Queen wanted this returned to
you.

Gawain produces the SCIMITAR that Mer'Lin gave to Galahad.

He throws it at Mer'Lin's feet in a LOUD CLATTER.

BROTHER MER'LIN

I will not fight you.

GAWAIN

I don't give a shit.

Gawain nods to the militia, *take them into custody.*

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - KING'S SOLAR - NIGHT

Lancelot and Lady Guinevere are alone in the royal solar.

LANCELOT

Galahad is no longer a threat to
you. Let him rot in the dark
depths. You must assemble the war
council and march on Lyonesse!

LADY GUINEVERE

I have not come this far to let
Arthur's murderer slip away into
forgotten history.

EYES ARE WATCHING THIS EXCHANGE

Set back in the wall, hidden, unknown --

LADY GUINEVERE (CONT'D)

First, I will make a spectacle of
Galahad's execution. And then, with
the strength of my throne asserted
before the eyes of Camelot, every
soldier of Albion will march South.

LADY GUINEVERE (CONT'D)
 We will reclaim Lyonesse and strike
 at the heart of the *Qu'Rad* Empire.

IT IS MORDRED watching Lady Guinevere and Lancelot from behind the walls. He sees his mother go close to Lancelot.

LADY GUINEVERE
 And then, the great Warrior-King
 Lancelot and his Queen Guinevere
 will be forever remembered as those
 who saved Albion.

Lady Guinevere moves inside and kisses Lancelot on the neck.

INSIDE THE SIEGE TUNNEL

Mordred lowers his eyes and backs away. He closes the panel.

BLACK

A distant RATTLING. Metal on metal. Harsh. Repetitive.

It comes closer. Closer...

INT. DUNGEON CELL - TIME UNKNOWN

The RATTLING is immediate.

Galahad blinks awake, naked and lying in a thatch of filthy hay on the floor of some dungeon cell far away from the light of day. The RATTLING persists.

Galahad looks up. A bent, grizzled GAOLER (40s) glowers down at him through the bars of his cell. The man's face is nodulated and purple with puss weeping from open sores.

The Gaoler drags his dagger across the bars of his cell, RATTLING them loudly. His cruel smile reveals most of his teeth to be missing. His voice is a wreck of rasps and slurs:

GAOLER
 So nice to see yous again, "Sir."
 Her Grace paid me extras to make
 sure yous are nice and comfortable.

Galahad props himself up on his elbows. He is in considerable discomfort. He squints at the Gaoler.

The Gaoler LAUGHS, a wheezing cackle. He picks up a pail sitting on the floor next to him.

GAOLER
 Yous look thirsty. Have some water,
 "Sir."

The Gaoler douses Galahad with the pail -- From Galahad's horrified reaction, it is clear that it wasn't water.

GAOLER

Don't yous worry, theys more where that's come from. Miggs fills up his pail every day.

(yells into the next cell)
Dontcha, Miggs?

The Gaoler CACKLES again, dragging the pail along the bars as he walks off towards Miggs' cell -- CLANK-CLANK-CLANK-CLANK --

BLACK -- TIME PASSES -- Then --

Galahad's hair and beard are growing back. He's been here for some time. He awakens to SOLDIERS crowding into his cell --

Galahad is on his feet, but he is weak and they are too much for him. Once he's restrained, the soldiers part to reveal --

LADY GUINEVERE looking right at him, Lancelot at her side.

LADY GUINEVERE

It is a happy day, Galahad. Today, justice shall be served for King Arthur Pendragon's murder.

Galahad looks right back at her. He laughs weakly.

GALAHAD

Happy news, indeed, Your Grace. I never imagined that you would come around to a confession.

Lady Guinevere sours. She looks at a soldier and nods, *do it.*

A hood blankets Galahad's head.

GALAHAD'S POV - DARKNESS.

Boots SCUFF on stone. Doors OPEN. Stairs are CLIMBED. The dark brightens a little. The sound of a CROWD rises, RISES --

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY

A CROWD OF THOUSANDS has gathered once again in the courtyard of the Castle Camelot.

At the center of the yard, a raised dais bears a hangman's platform on one side and a headsman's stone on the other.

The CROWD RAISES A CHEER when Galahad, hooded, is marched out onto the platform by Guinevere's soldiers. Galahad is forced to his knees and his head is pushed down onto the stone.

A HUSH falls over the crowd when their Queen takes the dais. Lady Guinevere is absolutely radiant. She takes a moment.

LADY GUINEVERE

It is a dark time for Camelot. Our King has been slain, betrayed by those he trusted the most. The Round Table lies in ruin. Knights have put their brothers to the sword to hide their secrets. They have turned on their own crown in a mad pursuit of power and wealth. All while an army of Saracen Savages masses at our borders. Your Queen shall restore order to Camelot and conquer the enemies of our realm. But first, justice must be carried out.

GALAHAD'S POV - ROARS RISE from the crowd -- Galahad sees nothing but shadows and darkness.

LADY GUINEVERE (O.S.)

My father, Lord Bedivere of Lyonesse, taught me to always be swift in justice. Murdering one's king is the most vile act any can commit. And aiding that act is no different than wielding the blade that saw it done. Guards, prepare the prisoner.

A ROAR from the crowd. Nothing happens to Galahad, but there is commotion around him. Suddenly, his hood is ripped off --

GALAHAD'S VISION CLEARS to reveal --

Brother Mer'Lin being marched onto the hangman's platform.

He has been stripped of his robes and is dressed barely in rags. The HANGMAN fits a noose around Mer'Lin's neck.

The crowd BOOS -- Individual shouts emerge, insulting Mer'Lin and demanding that he be hanged --

Galahad watches helplessly as Lady Guinevere nods to the hangman. He tightens the noose around Mer'Lin's neck and steps off the platform. There, he KICKS away the lever --

The platform below Mer'Lin's feet opens, dropping him --

The rope goes taught with a brittle SNAP.

ANGLE ON - Brother Mer'Lin's lifeless body swings from the hangman's rope.

GALAHAD'S POV - A flowing dress steps before his vision.

The Lady Guinevere kneels to face Galahad. She bows deeply, pantomiming a prayer. There, she whispers to Galahad:

LADY GUINEVERE
A Queen does not need the
confession of a traitor when she
has the love of her people.

Lady Guinevere smiles triumphantly -- But a sudden BLAST OF A HORN -- AHWOOOOOOO -- Turns her grin to stone.

She is immediately on her feet, alarmed --

The crowd ERUPTS in an excited DIN -- There are horses STOMPING, soldiers MARCHING, another HORN BLAST: AHWOOOOO --

Try as he might, Galahad cannot see what's happening --

HANGMAN (O.S.)
What in the name of the mother -- ?

THWIP! -- TWANG! -- The HANGMAN and HEADSMAN are both hit in the chest with arrows -- The horn BLOWS AGAIN --

AN ARMY OF A THOUSAND pours inside the main postern gate. Mounted cavalry, archers, foot soldiers --

ANGLE ON - Lancelot looks out at the approaching army, smirks to himself and walks off the dais, vanishing from sight --

THE MOUNTED CAVALRY CHARGES toward the dais -- Lady Guinevere looks around madly -- She cannot find Lancelot --

GAWAIN stands just off the platform. Lady Guinevere catches his eye and points to Galahad --

LADY GUINEVERE
Hood him and take him back to his
cell! NOW!

GALAHAD'S POV - He still cannot see --

Hands -- A HOOD -- Then DARKNESS AGAIN.

INT. DUNGEON CELL - TIME UNKNOWN

Galahad sits, dour and mute, in the corner of his cell, with his elbows propped on his knees. There's no telling how much time has passed.

Down the corridor, a gate CLANKS and GROANS as it opens. FOOTSTEPS approach Galahad's cell.

Galahad barely looks up when A VISITOR in a thick fur cloak steps in front of his cell. Two PRISON GUARDS are with him.

VISITOR (O.S.)
Leave us.

The guards' legs depart. Galahad finally looks up to see --

LORD PELLINORE (65), a warrior king if there ever was one. Tall and broad, he looks his years in his face but not in his physique. A fur cloak is draped over the deep blues and white of Avalon and a sword hangs at his side.

GALAHAD
(disbelief)
My Lord Pellinore?

Galahad falls over himself to kneel at Lord Pellinore's feet.

LORD PELLINORE
Rise, Galahad.

Galahad stands up, meeting his Lord eye-to-eye.

GALAHAD
Where is my son?

LORD PELLINORE
Lucan's leg is broken, but healing.
I have placed him in the care of my
most trusted Captain.

GALAHAD
Why have you come to Camelot?

LORD PELLINORE
Lyonesse smolders in ashes at the
hand of the Saracens. And then the
King-in-Waiting sends word to me
that half the Round Table is dead
and the First Knight is accused of
the King's murder. The Lord of
Avalon had little choice, hmm?

GALAHAD
Mordred sent for you?

LORD PELLINORE
Two very motivated riders. Their
mounts were nearly dead of
exhaustion when they arrived.

GALAHAD
Her Grace lies. She killed Arthur.
Poisoned him while their son
watched through the walls.

Lord Pellinore chuckles.

LORD PELLINORE

"Her Grace" had your head on the stone and still you find your courtesies. You are of admirable character, Galahad. That I have never doubted.

GALAHAD

Then you know this to be farce.

LORD PELLINORE

Of course I do. But we hard men of Avalon drag oaths and duty behind us like a dead carcass, do we not?

(darker)

What am I to do? Palamedes' army is set for invasion. Camelot is in disarray. Something must be done.

GALAHAD

An honorless crown cannot rule.

LORD PELLINORE

I have come here in an attempt to restore the rule of law, Galahad. I cannot do so by spiriting the King's accused assassin out of the city without trial or acquittal.

GALAHAD

That is not what I ask.

LORD PELLINORE

Then what would you have me do?

GALAHAD

Allow me to prove my innocence before the eyes of the Goddess.

Lord Pellinore knows what Galahad is asking of him.

LORD PELLINORE

Galahad, that is an antiquated ceremonial rite reserved for quarrels amongst the noble class --

GALAHAD

-- I have lands. An estate. I am First Knight of the Round Table. Does that not qualify me to have my guilt judged by the Goddess?

The bearded Lord makes a face, grumbling as he thinks.

LORD PELLINORE
A battle of wager.

GALAHAD
(nods)
Trial by combat.

LORD PELLINORE
You know it is within her right to
choose a second to fight for her.
And you know who she will choose.

GALAHAD
If I am innocent, then the will of
the Mother shall guide my hand.

Lord Pellinore chews on Galahad's proposal.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS (NEAR ROYAL CHAMBERS) - NIGHT

Lancelot stands at a relaxed attention outside the royal apartments, hand resting on the pommel of his sword.

THE DOUBLE DOORS swing open as Lord Pellinore leaves the solar. He regards Lancelot gruffly.

LANCELOT
My Lord.

Lord Pellinore departs, boots SCUFFING on stone as he goes.

When he is gone, the double doors open again. This time, an almost cheery Lady Guinevere emerges.

LADY GUINEVERE
Sir Lancelot, will you be kind and
search my quarters?

Lancelot dutifully obliges her.

INT. KING'S SOLAR - CONTINUOUS

Lady Guinevere SHUTS the doors behind them. Lancelot takes a half-hearted sweep of the solar.

LANCELOT
There appear to be no assassins,
beasts or beggars lurking in the
dark, Your Grace.

When Lancelot turns around to face her, he sees that she is positively beaming.

She is also untying her gown.

LADY GUINEVERE

That arrogant fool Galahad wishes
to invoke the battle of wager to
prove his innocence.

The news is the twist of a knife in Lancelot's gut. *I will have to kill Galahad.* A long beat passes in silence.

LADY GUINEVERE

Don't you see? This madness has
finally to come to an end.

Lancelot tries to recover, forcing a smile:

LANCELOT

I had no idea my Lady was so
skilled with a sword.

LADY GUINEVERE

You will be my sword. It is my
right as Queen choose a second.
(continuing to undress)
You will end Galahad before the
eyes of Camelot, before Morgan la
Fey and her druids, and before the
Green Mother herself. Galahad will
be guilty and dead and you and I
will at last be free.

She pulls her dress up over her head and discards it. There Guinevere stands before Lancelot, naked and beautiful.

Lancelot studies Guinevere where she stands.

He loves her, but he despises the creature she has become.

LADY GUINEVERE

Come and take me, my knight. My
lover. My King.

No longer able to resist, Lancelot strides toward her and lifts her up off the ground, making her SQUEAL with delight --

INT. DUNGEON CELL - TIME UNKNOWN

Galahad does pull ups using the bar at the top of his cell. He completes dozens of them before --

-- The gate at the end of the hall GROANS open.

MORDRED appears before Galahad's cell. He carries a beautiful, SHEATHED SWORD that is almost taller than he is.

GALAHAD

My Prince.

MORDRED

I -- I came to wish you good
fortune tomorrow.

GALAHAD

The Queen has decided, then.

MORDRED

The duel will be at dusk as the sun
sets over the Stonehenge.

A silence hangs between them. A hundred things unsaid.

MORDRED

I... betrayed your trust,
dishonored myself for selfish
reasons.

GALAHAD

You were protecting your family.
There is much honor in that...

He trails off... Galahad suddenly looks sad, broken.

GALAHAD

I put my honor before my family and
it has cost me both.

MORDRED

You are a good knight, Galahad.

GALAHAD

There are no good knights left.

Mordred approaches the cell, holding out the ornate sword.

MORDRED

The Grand Vizier of the *Qu'Rad Empire* gave this to my grandfather's grandfather, Uther Pendragon the First, nearly 200 years ago after their combined armies crushed the barbarians and drove them from the lands of Albion. The Grand Vizier said that it was a gift of peace, but also a reminder that war was never more than a sword's length away. Uther named the blade in the old tongue --

Galahad UNSHEATHES THE SWORD --

MORDRED

-- He called it *Excalibur*.

The blade is black, pattern-welded, a lethally simple design.

MORDRED

This blade passes from King to King
in my family. My father showed me
it once, but never used it himself.
I would like you to wield it
against Lancelot.

Mordred walks closer, gripping the bars and staring at Galahad with an intense gaze.

MORDRED

Kill him, Galahad.

Galahad's eyes return to *Excalibur*, looking it up and down...

INT. DUNGEON CORRIDOR - TIME UNKNOWN

A detachment of CITY MILITIA march Galahad down the corridor.

Galahad is garbed in black from head to toe and wears *Excalibur* on the baldric across his waist.

INT. THE CASTLE CAMELOT - BATHS - AFTERNOON

Lancelot sits expressionless in a large tub of scalding water. SERVANTS scrub him clean as he stares far away.

He speaks to them, entranced, as though he has left his body.

LANCELOT

Today, I am to kill the only honorable man left in Camelot. I will do this out love for a woman who repulses me. And all this in betrayal of a noble oath for the defense of one most vile.

The servants, trained to listen but say nothing, finish scrubbing Lancelot. They hold a TOWEL OPEN --

LANCELOT

But perhaps the Green Mother is truly just.

Lancelot emerges from the bath, revealing THE SCARRED SKIN on his chest where he burned off his Round Table brand.

EXT. THE STONEHENGE - LATE AFTERNOON

An orb of deep orange reaches out from the horizon with tendrils of crimson as the sun sets over Camelot, shafts of the ruddy light piercing the gaps in the Stonehenge.

A constant breeze blows, sweeping the dried and brittle leaves of autumn over the landscape.

A CROWD of knights, nobles, and druids surrounds the outer perimeter of the Stonehenge circle.

MORDRED stands beside Lady Guinevere and Gawain.

LUCAN, his leg still splinted, stands on a crutch beside Lord Pellinore on the opposite side of the Stonehenge.

LUCAN

Do you think the Green Mother will
be just today?

Lord Pellinore grumbles. *Superstitions.*

LORD PELLINORE

I find it fascinating that the man
judged innocent by the goddess in a
wager of battle is most often the
better fighter.

MORGAN LA FEY, the Mother's Daughter, walks out from the setting sun, a liquid shadow against the fiery light.

LANCELOT AND GALAHAD stand ten yards apart at the center of the Stonehenge, facing Morgan La Fey.

Lancelot wears the rich heraldry of house Pendragon while Galahad is in stark black.

Morgan La Fey steps forward, walking out to Lancelot. She stops in front of him and he kneels. Even on his knees, he almost looks eye-to-eye with the tiny woman.

Galahad watches as the Mother's Daughter speaks to Lancelot for some time, but he cannot hear what she says.

When she is finished, Morgan La Fey comes to stand before Galahad. He kneels, immediately shocked at what he sees --

Morgan La Fey cannot be a day over 16 years old. Her voice is musical and soft, but wise far beyond her years:

MORGAN LA FEY

I have seen this in the fires of
the sacrificed oak. Sadness gave
way to hope with the fire of the
true and the just burning bright
after all else faded to embers.

Galahad looks back at her, unsure what to make of her vision.

Morgan La Fey backs away from him, returning to the top of the Stonehenge, the sunset blazing around her silhouette.

MORGAN LA FEY

Here we gather in the holiest of places under the holiest of eyes. The wager of battle is not a duel fought amongst mortal men, but a struggle of the eternal as the Goddess *Danu* weighs guilt against innocence. Truth against falsehood.

(to Galahad and Lancelot)

Litigants, this is your last opportunity for confession. Speak now or put forward your lives for the choosing of the just.

Galahad stares down Lancelot, who is the first to turn away. A moment after, Galahad also turns to face Morgan La Fey.

MORGAN LA FEY

So judged shall be your souls.

ANGLE ON - Lady Guinevere steps forward from the crowd and walks to Lancelot. There, she removes his cloak and takes his baldric and scabbard once he has unsheathed his sword.

LADY GUINEVERE

Defeat him for the love you bear me, my Knight of Camelot.

Lancelot, eyes narrow and focused, does not answer.

Galahad unsheathes *Excalibur*. Two druids arrive to take Galahad's cloak and baldric. No words are exchanged.

GALAHAD AND LANCELOT face one another, swords drawn.

Lancelot takes the first stride forward, raising his blade --

Excalibur comes up to meet it -- STEEL RINGS ON STEEL and the wager of battle has begun --

Lancelot moves like he is made of water, striking hard like a breaking wave before turning back into a liquid current --

Galahad defends, defends, defends the onslaught of attacks, waiting for Lancelot to show some weakness --

But there is none. Lancelot is a prodigy with the sword. Unstoppable. A juggernaut. And he knows it.

Lancelot slashes high at Galahad's head -- Galahad parries --

But in a blur, Lancelot spins around, coming low and slashing Galahad across the thigh --

Galahad stumbles forward on his lame leg. Blood leaks through his black trousers and pools in the green grass at his feet.

Lancelot backs away. He does not strike the killing blow.

ANGLE ON - Lucan reaches out and grabs Lord Pellinore's cloak. Pellinore looks sidelong at the boy.

Galahad sinks down on the wounded leg, resting on his sword.

LANCELOT
Yield to me.

Galahad tries to stand, but falters -- Lancelot edges closer. Through grit teeth:

LANCELOT
Yield.

Suddenly, Galahad springs back to his feet, sword rising --

Lancelot stumbles backward, caught off guard -- He parries, parries again, backpedaling --

Galahad slashes at Lancelot's face -- Lancelot blocks the blow, but Galahad's sword deflects awkwardly --

Excalibur cuts a diagonal slash across Lancelot's face from his forehead to his opposite cheek --

ANGLE ON - Lady Guinevere whips her head to Gawain, who shows no reaction. She tries to keep her composure --

Lancelot staggers backwards in shock, blinded by his own blood. He paws at the injury -- There is a lot of blood, but the wound is superficial --

Enraged, Lancelot slashes at Galahad hard, backing him up --

Galahad stumbles on his crippled leg --

Lancelot lunges, driving the point of his sword through Galahad's shoulder --

Excalibur drops from Galahad's useless fingers and he sinks back to his knee, blood now gushing from two wounds.

LANCELOT
Yield to me now.

But Galahad pats the grass with his left hand, feeling around for *Excalibur's* grip.

Lancelot watches, but cannot believe it. *He wants to fight with his off hand.*

LANCELOT
Yield, Galahad. End this. Please.

Galahad crawls on hand and leg, inching toward *Excalibur* --

ANGLE ON - Lucan makes a move to go for his father, but Lord Pellinore's hand flies down to hold the boy where he stands.

Galahad closes his left hand around *Excalibur*. He looks up at to see tears welling in Lancelot's blue eyes --

LANCLOET
(voice breaking)
YIELD, DAMN YOU!

ANGLE ON - Lady Guinevere looks incredulous. The crowd BUZZES with surprise. She shouts at Gawain in frustration --

LADY GUINEVERE
What is the fool doing?
(shouting over the din)
End him!

Galahad drives *Excalibur* limply up at Lancelot's chest --

GROWLING in frustration, Lancelot BASHES the blade aside --

And Lancelot thrusts his sword through Galahad's chest until it explodes BLOODY RED from the other side --

ANGLE ON - Lucan leaves Lord Pellinore, dropping his crutch and suddenly holding a SHORTSWORD --

Galahad's eyes go wide, then narrow. He collapses, a RUSH of air escaping his punctured lungs.

Lancelot backs away from Galahad's body, weeping tears and blood from his wounded face.

Lady Guinevere, smiling broadly, pushes through the crowd to emerge in the open area in the Stonehenge.

Lucan approaches Sir Gawain -- Raises his sword --

LUCAN
GAWAIN!

Gawain turns, caught off guard -- But he quickly slides his own longsword from his scabbard, turning to face Lucan --

Lucan SLASHES --

But Gawain easily knocks the sword out of Lucan's grip --
Coldly detached, aims his sword to spear Lucan --

CLANG! -- In a blur, Lancelot is between Gawain and Lucan --

Lancelot's sword RAINS down on Gawain's as he ROARS WILDLY, backing Gawain up --

Gawain thrusts at Lancelot, missing -- Lancelot comes back and SLASHES Gawain across the eyes, blinding him --

Dropping his sword, Gawain staggers backwards, pawing at the blood pouring over his useless eyes --

Lancelot kicks Gawain in the chest, knocking him over --

Turning over his sword, Lancelot thrusts the point downward through Gawain's chest, spearing him into the earth.

Lucan stares down at Gawain's corpse, wide-eyed with shock.

LADY GUINEVERE (O.S.)
Lancelot!

Lancelot turns around. Though still bleeding and heaving with exhaustion, there is ice in the gaze he gives his Queen.

Lady Guinevere suddenly knows that something is wrong.

Very wrong. Lancelot looks to Morgan La Fey:

LANCELOT
Galahad is innocent, Your Holiness.

Lancelot throws down his sword.

LANCELOT
It was the Lady Guinevere who murdered the King. I watched her force the poison on him, but I did nothing. And when Arthur was gone, I took his Queen into his own bed.

ANGLE ON - Lady Guinevere's face drains of color as her world comes abruptly to an end.

LADY GUINEVERE
NO!!

Her SHRIEK sounds far away, muted and echoing...

FROM GALAHAD'S POV --

Through the grass against his face, Galahad watches as Lord Pellinore steps out, SHOUTING and pointing --

Soldiers descend on the Queen and Lancelot --

Lady Guinevere fights them as they restrain her --

But Lancelot readily surrenders himself into custody.

The SOUND FADES from Galahad's world, as if he is sinking deeper and deeper into water.

The color of the scene before him soon BLEEDS AWAY as the images fade... Then --

PURE WHITE.

And a voice speaks calmly from the ether:

GALAHAD (V.O.)
I am one of six.
I am a degree of the circle.
I have completed the six trials.

COLOR bleeds in -- IMAGES burn bright, then fade into memory:

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the blade.

EXCALIBUR - The beautiful sword is SLAMMED into its sheathe.

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the fist.

LANCELOT - A sutured wound runs the length of his once-perfect face. Dressed all in black, he stands stoic, looking out into nothing. Someone drapes a NOOSE over his head.

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the pain.

LADY GUINEVERE - Eyes red from sobs and rage, is restrained by SOLDIERS as a noose is fitted over her neck as well.

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the will.

MORDRED - Now the KING OF ALBION, looks at his mother and Lancelot, standing in their nooses. He NODS to someone O.S. --

GALAHAD (V.O.)
That of the blood.

WOODEN TRAPDOORS - Open up -- ROPES go TAUGHT -- CRACK! SNAP!

GALAHAD (V.O.)
And that of the oath itself.

THE CASTLE GATE - Closed. Then, it begins to rise. It rises -- RISES -- The ARMY OF CAMELOT races out on horseback --

GALAHAD (V.O.)
I take this oath to forego all else
in protection of the royal blood of
King Arthur Pendragon.

THE POSTERN GATE - The double portcullis rises in unison -- Camelot's heavy cavalry rides hard through the opening --

GALAHAD (V.O.)

I am my king's sword and I am his
shield.

LORD PELLINORE - Rides at the head of the ARMY OF AVALON --

GALAHAD (V.O.)

I have given all in service of him.
My possessions are forfeit.

LUCAN - Rides at Lord Pellinore's side, swathed in the
heraldry of Avalon --

GALAHAD (V.O.)

My family are strangers to my eyes.

ARMIES - March, battalions assembled, banners flying --
Yellow and purple and green, all the heraldries of Albion --

GALAHAD (V.O.)

I shall know not love, or desire,
or envy, or want.

THE NEW ROUND TABLE - Six young knights ride in formation
beside their KING, paragons of chivalry and honor --

GALAHAD (V.O.)

I shall know only this oath.
Loyalty above all else.
For I am one of The Six.
I am a degree of the circle.

KING MORDRED - Rears his horse to a halt, all the ARMIES OF
ALBION at his back and flanks. He RAISES EXCALIBUR --

GALAHAD (V.O.)

My life, my last drop of blood, in
service to the Crown of Albion.

REVERSE TO: LYONESSE - The Southern-most city of Albion burns
at the Saracen torch, lying in ruin across an open plain.

And so begins THE CHARGE for war with the *Qu'Rad* Empire.

SMASH TO BLACK.